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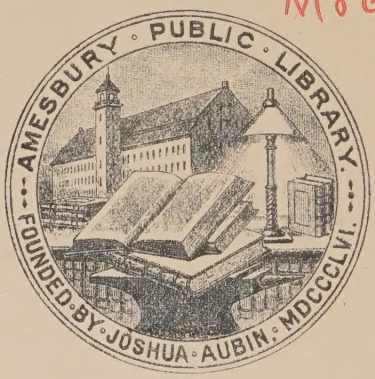

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THE
POEMS AND SONNETS
OF
LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

Louise Chandler Moulton's Writings

Poems and Sonnets

SWALLOW FLIGHTS
IN THE GARDEN OF DREAMS
AT THE WIND'S WILL

Prose Writings

SOME WOMEN'S HEARTS
RANDOM RAMBLES
OURSELVES AND OUR NEIGHBORS
MISS EYRE FROM BOSTON AND OTHERS
LAZY TOURS IN SPAIN AND ELSEWHERE

"Bed-Time Stories" Series

BED-TIME STORIES
MORE BED-TIME STORIES
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FIRELIGHT STORIES
STORIES TOLD AT TWILIGHT

Little, Brown, & Co., Publishers

Yours Cordially
Louise Chandler Moulton.

THE

POEMS AND SONNETS

OF

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

AUTHOR OF "BED-TIME STORIES," "OURSELVES AND OUR NEIGHBORS," ETC.

811 M86z

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LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1909

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LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

1835–1908.

WHEN a soul at once so gentle and so strong as that of Louise Chandler Moulton passes from us, a soul of lofty aspiration, complete integrity, perfect kindness, unbounded sympathy, something more is meet than brief notice of the life it has informed; for it has certainly wrought upon the generations and given them of its abundance. While that soul was with us, we stood, perhaps, too near for the perspective which allowed us to recognize its greatness.

It would be difficult to account for the strain in her blood which gave this poet her genius and made her what she was. She was born in Pomfret, Connecticut, April tenth, 1835, of a race long known in its borders; but with the exception of a great-grandmother who was a rare Greek scholar, of a forbear a soldier of the Revolution, and of Stephen Hopkins, from whom also she was descended, the family had been quiet, unromantic people, who, although laying claim to some noble

ancestry, lived simple lives, with something more than the ordinary financial income, who found their happiness in a strict Calvinistic faith, and went from horizon to horizon of their days and left no peculiarly visible sign.

It was obedience to their stern principles that forbade to the child Louise dances and fairy-books and all frivolities, and thus forced her to live in a world of her own fancying, creating her companions when she had no other. But the terrors of the old orthodoxy held the child's imagination, and cast a degree of melancholy over her inner life that seldom disappeared.

> "The weed shrinks back to die
> On kinder sod.
> Shall a life which found no sun
> In death find God?"

she has written. In the main, however, she was a strong and happy child of great vitality; she loved running in the face of a boisterous wind, that she might feel her life with joy, even although she wept at the sound of the wind at night. An only child, she was a precious possession to an adoring father and mother, who gave her the best education of the day, and refused her nothing that they

thought it right she should have. Their views of the right were those of their day and creed.

Louise was compact of genius from the beginning, genius that ripened and bore fruit in due time in enchanting lyrics and stately sonnets, and that taught her, without experience, to sound the depths of human hearts, as in a measure she did in her earliest work. She had hardly outgrown the play and companions of a little Spanish drama of her own invention when, at fourteen, she sent her first verses to a paper; she had lived so entirely in her unguessed emotions that she felt a touch of wrong in doing it. At eighteen, however, she had printed her first book, "This, That and the Other," which sold some twenty thousand copies, and which elicited ardent praise from many besides her publishers; praise for its contents, but still more for its writer.

She was not quite twenty when she married Mr. William Upham Moulton, a Boston publisher, a man of culture and of much personal attraction. Lingering a moment on the church porch in the sunset light, she has been described by one who saw her, as a radiant being, in her bridal veil, blooming, blushing, full of life and joy and love. An exquisite

skin, the "rose crushed on ivory," hazel eyes with black lashes and black brows, and a confiding, fearless glance, small white teeth, a delightful smile, cheek and chin having the antique line, all united to make a loveliness which no portrait has successfully rendered, and which tender consideration and grace of manner accented to wonderful charm.

Her house in Boston became early a center of hospitality; and it is now historic, not only through her own life there, but in remembrance of the illustrious who have crossed its threshold. Here were treasured souvenirs of remarkable interest, unattainable autographs, in books, in pictures, in first drafts, as, for instance, a page of Swinburne's "Atalanta," with countless erasures, letters from Robert Browning, Rossetti, Jean Ingelow, Tennyson, and many another. Here her husband died, and here she dwelt through her widowhood, remaining in seclusion for a few years after her husband's death; and here she died herself, at the close of a long illness borne with singular force of will and ineffable patience and sweetness, under the care of her devoted daughter and son-in-law and of the faithful maid who had loved and served her for many years.

Mrs. Moulton crossed the Atlantic first in 1876, and, with three exceptions, every summer afterwards till the last two of her life. She was a good sailor; but she always felt the vast mystery and awesomeness of the sea. In London, after that early voyage, she saw the Queen open Parliament for the first time since the Prince Consort's death. In Rome, where she had letters to the Howitts, she abandoned herself to the delights of studios, galleries, gardens, and palaces; and in Venice to all the indescribable spell that haunts the waters there.

She had but one letter of introduction in England; it was to Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes), who gave her a breakfast to which many of the leaders of the literary and artistic world were asked, and where, at once, she took hearts captive. Shortly before leaving, a gentleman standing beside her hoped she had enjoyed the occasion; and she answered sweetly, but with her usual directness, that she had done so very much, but was disappointed at not having met Mr. Browning, whom she had wished to see more than anyone in England. "Browning," he said gayly, "c'est moi!" Later they became warm personal friends; he consulted her on various

important matters; and she always wore a ring given her by Mrs. Bloomfield Moore in remembrance of a day when, at that lady's house, Browning talked to her alone, for many hours, of his life and art. Her personal beauty, her ease and gracious manners, her voice in which, a poet said, "all sweetnesses abide," her magnetic charm, were at once everywhere recognized; she was invited out constantly, and her rooms were the meeting-place of the liveliest wits, the finest artists and the sweetest singers of England. They called her "the American with the golden voice." That voice was indeed dulcet, yet of great range and flexibility, always keeping its flute-like intonations. In reading aloud it gave a dramatic quality to the page, and drew from prose or poem the last drop of its honey. It was delightful to hear her repeat, as she did only a few days before her death,

"Roses that briefly live,
Joy is your dower;
Blest be the fates that give
One perfect hour.
And, though too soon you
In your dust glows
Something the passer-by
Knows was a Rose."

Velvet-soft in this, her voice had a ringing gayety whose strange undertone was sorrow when reciting "If there were dreams to buy"; and "Bend low, O dusky night" was breathed through deep notes of tragic sweetness.

In 1877 Mrs. Moulton's first volume of verse was published in America, the English edition (1878) bearing the title of "Swallow Flights";— her choice of titles was always happy.

> "Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
> Their wings in tears, and skim away,"

Tennyson had sung. She was so modest that the acclaim which answered the publication of the book amazed her. The Athenaeum dwelt on the imagination and the delicate loveliness and perfection of technique; The Examiner spoke of the power and originality of the verses, of their intensity and music; The Tatler declared her the one truly natural singer in an age of aesthetic affectation; and The Academy accorded the verses the palm of felicity, suggestiveness, and an imaginative quality pervaded by the sweetness of perfect womanhood. All the English papers were affluent of praise; her lyric grace

was compared to Herrick's, and her sonnet "One Dread" to the work of Sir Philip Sydney. The student and lover of her best work will confess that much of this was simple justice. The pleasure that such words gave her was increased by the fact that then she knew scarcely one of the critics. Letters came also from Frederick Locker, Austin Dobson, Matthew Arnold, and indeed too many more for mention, while her songs were set to music by Francesco Berger and Lady Charlesmont, as later, and on this side of the water, they were by Arthur Foote and Margaret Lang and Ethelbert Nevin.

Philip Bourke Marston, in the beginning of an acquaintance which grew into intimate friendship, not only with him, but with his mother and father, and his sister Cecily who died in Mrs. Moulton's arms, wrote "There can be no doubt that your place is in the very foremost rank of poets. The divine simplicity, strength, and subtlety, the intense, fragrant, genuine individuality of your poems will make them imperishable." And he further said that no poem gave him such an idea of the heartlessness of nature as the "House of Death," —

"The birds make insolent music
Where the sunshine riots outside,
And the winds are merry and wanton
With the summer's pomp and pride.

"But into this desolate mansion,
Where Love has closed the door,
Nor sunshine nor summer shall enter,
Since she can come in no more."

Robert Browning wrote her then, also, saying that he closed the book with flowers before his eyes, music in his ears, and thoughts across his brain. At another time Burne-Jones said of the mighty poem "Laus Veneris," inspired by one of his paintings, that it was a refreshment and filled him with courage. Of subsequent poems, Thomas Hardy spoke as things filled with the supreme quality, emotion; and William Minto wrote of their spontaneity and epigrammatic concision, and William Sharp in the Athenaeum gave whole pages to the flattering review of her work. Professor Meiklejohn, connected with the University of St. Andrews for twenty-seven years, a rare and discriminating critic, said that she deserved to be classed with the best Elizabethan lyrists, with Crashaw, Campion, and Shakespeare, and that her sonnets should

have place with Milton's and Wordsworth's and Rossetti's. Of "A Quest" he said it was difficult to speak in unexaggerated language; and other verses he compared to Goethe's and to Heine's. Moreover, he said that she must look for her brothers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, among the noble and intense lyrists. Her insight, her subtlety, her delicacy, her music, he thought hardly matched and certainly not surpassed by Herbert or Vaughan. He declared that the sonnet "A Summer's Growth" united the passion of the Italian with the imagination of the English; he thought the sonnet "Great Love" worthy of place with Dante's and Petrarch's sonnets; and he pronounced the sonnet "Were but my spirit loosed upon the air" one of the greatest in the English language. This unconscious subtlety, this evasive delicacy, kindled by the dramatic instinct, are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the exquisite sonnet "In Time to Come."

"The time will come full soon! I shall be gone,
And you sit silent in the silent place,
With the sad autumn sunlight on your face.
Remembering the loves that were your own,
Haunted perchance by some familiar tone,

You will be weary then for the dead days,
And mindful of their sweet and bitter ways,
Though passion into memory shall have grown.
Then will I with your other ghosts draw nigh,
And whisper, as I pass, some former word, —
Some old endearment known in days gone by,
Some tenderness that once your pulses stirred : —
Which was it spoke to you, the wind or I?
I think you, musing, scarcely will have heard."

In America, also, the tributes to her genius and its expression were enthusiastic from Longfellow, Lowell, Dr. Holmes, Dr. Parsons, Edmund Stedman, Aldrich, and so many leading critics that space forbids their enumeration. In speaking of her sonnets, Whittier wrote her, " It seems to me that the sonnet was never set to such music, and never weighted with more deep and tender thought." And although some of her greater lyrics will be known and loved as long as the language lives, such as the wonderful Prelude to " Swallow Flights," " Come Back, Dear Days," " We Lay Us Down To Sleep," " Laus Veneris," " The House of Death," " Arcady," " If There Were Dreams To Sell," " To Night," " Shall I Not Know? " yet her sonnets are her masterpieces and contain her noblest thought.

Their construction and technique are perfect; they sweep forward to break like the crest of a wave on the last line, and they are rich with feeling, music, and beauty. Very little of all the foreign praise was known in America. Its subject received it simply and naturally, and with no more elation than she had exhibited at the praise of those on this side of the water. No one meeting her socially would dream that she had it. In her successes of many kinds she never exhibited vanity or exultation; she felt her standards higher than anything she reached. A red rose-bush, trained into the shape of a magnificent basket of roses, sent to her, during her illness, by the Boston Authors' Club, seemed to give her more pleasure than any flattering criticism.

Besides her poems, Mrs. Moulton published various other volumes. "Random Rambles," and "Lazy Tours in Spain" were eloquent records of the joy she had in the beauty of the Mediterranean countries; while "Bed-time Stories," "Firelight Stories," and "Stories told at Twilight" have held the love of children for thirty years and over. In addition to these, she edited the poems of Philip Bourke Marston, at the wish of his

father, Westland Marston, a noted dramatist of the last generation, and the verses also of Arthur O'Shaughnessy, a brother-in-law of Philip.

Few, if any, people have had such distinguished friendships with so many of the prominent in literature and art; — in fact, there is hardly any one of distinction in England or America with whom she did not have a pleasant acquaintance or some intimacy, and with most of whom her correspondence was more or less frequent. It was a fine dignity which never allowed her to violate the sanctity of the hospitality she received and gave in England, never writing or gossiping concerning it, although sometimes speaking of it in the reminiscences of purely private conversation.

Quite aside from the greatness and distinction of her work, was the greatness of her character. She forgave wrong, forgot injury, excused insult. For many years a reviewer for newspapers and periodicals, she never wrote an unkind word; the sensibilities of others were sacred to her, she could not wound them; where she could not praise she said nothing. Charity, in its every form, indeed, was one of her chief characteristics, for her heart was as large as her brain; she condemned no one. It was not only with an

always open purse that she afforded help, aiding the young musician to the needed instrument, the suffering to a physician, the poor out of their mortgages and other distresses; but she spent hours in going over the young poet's work, giving praise here and corrections there, according to her perfect taste; in suggesting to the insufficiently trained critic the treatment of a subject; in listening to tedious intruders; and she never closed her doors to the most uninteresting or least desirable. She constantly had letters of thanks for the help certain of her verses had given those in trouble; they were the ones marked by her genuine emotion; for her best work was always the work of emotion. Dr. Holmes once wrote of the passionate sincerity of her poems; and it was impossible for her to work other than as the deeps of the spirit were stirred; her dramatic quality also gave her the power to enter into the life of others and make their emotions her own. She was a being of absolute uprightness, incapable of untruth, faithful to her ideals, ingenuous, confiding, unsuspicious, without guile, caring nothing for place or power, for social rank and position, or for wealth; of a childlike nature throughout life, a triumphant woman, but

always a child. Youth never deserted her; the earth and its people were always fresh and dear to her; she loved life and the joy of the world. Just a month before her death she wrote: "Thank Heaven, I am still in this world. How I wish I knew what was to come afterwards. But, oh, I dread the unknown!" It was her childlike, trusting quality that kept her unaware of the immanence of death, and she crossed into that unknown without suffering or recognition of it as she fell asleep. All her days were lived unconsciously on the lines of one of her verses.

"Some day or other I shall surely come
Where true hearts wait for me;
Then let me learn the language of that home
While here on earth I be,
Lest my poor lips for want of words be dumb
In that High Company."

Few women have been so loved as this one, and with such abundant reason. Few will be so missed, and by so many. As one looked at her where she lay in her lovely dignity at last, buried among flowers, one could only think that wherever her beautiful spirit was, it would make the place Heaven.

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

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SWALLOW FLIGHTS.

DEAR eyes, that read these lines of mine
As you have read my heart,
Forgive, since you the one divine,
The others' lack of art.

SWALLOW-FLIGHTS.

FORTH from the wind-swept Country of my Heart,
Fly fast, swift wings!
For hence the summers and their suns depart, —
Here no bird sings.

With spring this country was all verdurous
When first you came;
Its leafage of sweet songs solicitous;
Its skies aflame

With dreaming of the summer's warm delights;
Streams sought the sea;
White moons made beautiful the waiting nights;
Your wings were free.

But here you nested through the smiling spring, —
Through summer, too ;
'T is autumn now, and pleasant things take wing,
So why not you ?

Fly hence, and carry with you all my dreams,
My hopes, my fears ;
Shall I, while sitting by Life's frozen streams,
Weep idle tears ?

Fly hence, swift wings — I have been glad with you
In Life's glad spring ;
Heard summer songs, and thought their promise true ;
But now — take wing.

You are not doves, that you should bring back leaves
From whelming seas ;
Fly far, swift truants, from my silent eaves, —
Leave me but peace.

MAY–FLOWERS.

IF you catch a breath of sweetness,
And follow the odorous hint
Through woods where the dead leaves rustle
And the golden mosses glint,

Along the spicy sea-coast,
Over the desolate down,
You will find the dainty May-flowers
When you come to Plymouth town.

Where the shy Spring tends her darlings,
And hides them away from sight,
Pull off the covering leaf-sprays
And gather them, pink and white,

Tinted by mystical moonlight,
Freshened by frosty dew,
Till the fair, transparent blossoms
To their pure perfection grew.

Then carry them home to your lady,
For Flower of the Spring is she, —
Pink and white, and dainty and slight,
And lovely as Love can be.

Shall they die because of her beauty?
Shall they live because she is sweet?
They will know for what they were born,
But you — must wait at her feet.

MY SUMMER.

DO you think the summer will ever come,
With white of lily and flush of rose, —
With the warm, bright days of joy and June,
So long you dream they will never close ?

Will the birds, atilt on the bending boughs,
Sing out their hearts in a mad delight ;
And the golden butterflies, sun-suffused,
Shimmer and shine from morn till night?

Do you think my summer will ever come,
With brow of lily and cheek of rose?
Shall I hold her fast, — my Joy, my June, —
And dream that my day will never close?

Will she mock the birds on the bending boughs
(For her voice is music, — my heart's delight),
Or be content, like the butterflies,
In the sun of my love from morn till night?

MORNING GLORY.

EARTH 'S awake, 'neath the laughing skies,
After the dewy and dreamy night, —
Riot of roses and babel of birds,
All the world in a whirl of delight.

Roses smile in their white content,
Roses blush in their crimson bliss,
As the vagrant breezes wooing them
Ruffle their petals with careless kiss.

Yellow butterflies flutter and float
Jewelled humming-birds glitter and glow,
And scorning the ways of such idle things
Bees flit busily to and fro.

The mocking-bird swells his anxious throat,
Trying to be ten birds in one ;
And the swallow twitters, and dives, and darts
Into the azure to find the sun.

But robin red-breast builds his house
Singing a song of the joy to come,
And the oriole trims his golden vest,
Glad to be back in his last year's home.

Lilies that sway on their slender stalks,
  Morning-glories that nod to the breeze,
Bloom of blossoms and joy of birds, —
  What in the world is better than these?

A PAINTED FAN.

ROSES and butterflies snared on a fan,
All that is left of a summer gone by;
Of swift, bright wings that flashed in the sun,
And loveliest blossoms that bloomed to die!

By what subtle spell did you lure them here,
Fixing a beauty that will not change;
Roses whose petals never will fall,
Bright, swift wings that never will range?

Had you owned but the skill to snare as well
The swift-winged hours that came and went,
To prison the words that in music died,
And fix with a spell the heart's content,

Then had you been of magicians the chief;
And loved and lovers should bless your art,
If you could but have painted the soul of the thing, —
Not the rose alone, but the rose's heart!

Flown are those days with their winged delights,
As the odor is gone from the summer rose;
Yet still, whenever I wave my fan,
The soft, south wind of memory blows.

LONG IS THE WAY.

LONG is the way, O Lord!
My steps are weak:
I listen for Thy word, —
When wilt Thou speak?

Must I still wander on
'Mid noise and strife;
Or go as Thou hast gone,
From life to Life?

AUTOMNE.

[For a Picture by Hamon.]

OH, glad and free was Love until the fall;
Then came a spirit on the frosty air
To chill with icy breath the summer's bloom,
And Love lies with the blossoms, blighted there.

He throve so kindly all the summer-time, —
Not warmer was the rose's crimson heart;
Dews fell to bless him, and the soft winds blew,
And gentle rains shed tears to ease his smart.

Through long June days and burning August noons,
The flowers and Love stole sweetness from the sun;
Then summer went, — the days grew brief and cold,
The short sweet lives of summer things were done.

No butterfly flits through November's gloom,
No bird-note quivers on its frosty air, —
Sweet Love had wings, and would have flown away,
But Autumn chilled him with the blossoms there.

OUT IN THE SNOW.

THE snow and the silence came down together,
Through the night so white and so still;
And young folks, housed from the bitter weather, —
Housed from the storm and the chill, —

Heard in their dreams the sleigh-bells jingle,
Coasted the hill-sides under the moon,
Felt their cheeks with the keen air tingle,
Skimmed the ice with their steel-clad shoon.

They saw the snow when they rose in the morning,
Glittering ghost of the vanished night,
Though the sun shone clear in the winter dawning,
And the day with a frosty pomp was bright.

Out in the clear, cold, winter weather, —
Out in the winter air like wine, —
Kate with her dancing scarlet feather,
Bess with her peacock plumage fine,

Joe and Jack with their pealing laughter,
Frank and Tom with their gay hallo,
And half a score of roisterers after,
Out in the witching, wonderful snow.

Shivering graybeards shuffle and stumble,
Righting themselves with a frozen frown,
Grumbling at every snowy tumble;
But young folks know why the snow came down.

A WEED.

HOW shall a little weed grow,
That has no sun?
Rains fall and north winds blow, —
What shall be done?

Out come some little pale leaves
At the spring's call,
But the harsh north winds blow,
And sad rains fall.

Would'st try to keep it warm
With fickle breath?
He must, who would give life,
Be Lord of death.

Some day you forget the weed, —
Man's thoughts are brief, —
And your coldness steals like frost
Through each pale leaf,

Till the weed shrinks back to die
On kinder sod:
Shall a life which found no sun
In death find God?

A QUEST.

ALL in the summer even,
When sea and sky were bright,
As royally the sunset
Went forth to meet the night,

My Love and I were sailing
Into the shining West,
To find some Happy Island,
Some Paradise of rest.

We steered where sunset splendor
Made golden all the shore;
The rocks behind its brightness
Were cruel as before.

Within the caves sang sirens;
But there the whirlpools be:
Not there the Happy Islands,
Not there the peaceful sea.

Toward the deep mid-ocean
Tides ran and swift winds blew;
It must be there those Islands
Await the longing view.

Their shores are soft with verdure,
  Their skies for ever fair,
And always is the fragrance
  Of blossoms on the air.

I set our sail to seek them,
  But she, my Love, drew back:
"Not yet; the night is chilly,
  I fear that unknown track."

So home we sailed, at twilight,
  To the familiar shore;
Turned from the golden glory,
  To live the old life o'er.

We 'll make no further ventures, —
  For timid is my Love, —
Until fresh sailing orders
  Are sent us from above.

Then past the deep mid-ocean
  'Twixt life and Life we 'll steer,
To land on happier islands
  Than those we dreamed of here.

SOME DAY OR OTHER.

SOME day or other I shall surely come
Where true hearts wait for me;
Then let me learn the language of that home
While here on earth I be,
Lest my poor lips for want of words be dumb
In that High Company.

THROUGH A WINDOW.

I LIE here at rest in my chamber,
And look through the window again,
With eyes that are changed since the old time,
And the sting of an exquisite pain.

'T is not much that I see for a picture,
Through boughs that are green with the spring, —
A barn with its roof gray and mossy,
And above it a bird on the wing;

Or, lifting my head a thought higher,
Some hills and a village I know,
And over it all the blue heaven,
With a white cloud floating below.

Ah! once the roof was a prison,
My mind and the sky were free,
My thoughts with the birds went flying,
And my hopes were a heaven to me.

Now I come from the limitless distance
Where I followed my youth's wild will,
Where they press the wine of delusion
That you drink and are thirsty still;

And I know why the bird with the springtime
To the gnarled old tree comes back, —
He has tried the south and the summer,
He has felt what the sweet things lack.

WAITING.

I 'M waiting for my darling,
Here, sitting by the sea,
Whom never any ship that sails
Brings home again to me.

"Oh, sailor! have you seen her?
You 'd know her by her eyes, —
So blue they are, so tender,
So full of glad surprise."

"Yes, I have seen your darling:
A fair wind never fails
To waft the good ship unto
The shore for which she sails.

"King Death they call the Captain, —
His crew a spectral band, —
He steers with pennons flying
Toward a far-off land.

"No other ship goes thither,
And back across that main,
The passengers he carries
He never brings again."

WIFE TO HUSBAND.

IF I am dust while thou art quick and glad,
Bethink thee, sometimes, what good cheer we had, —
What happy days beside the shining seas,
Or by the twilight fire in careless ease,
Reading the rhymes of some old poet lover,
Or whispering our own love-story over.

When thou hast mourned for me a fitting space,
And set another in my vacant place,
Charmed with her brightness, trusting in her truth,
Warmed to new life by her beguiling youth,
Be happy, dearest one, and surely know
I would not have thee thy life's joys forego.

Yet think of me sometimes, where cold and still
I lie, who once was swift to do thy will,
Whose lips so often answered to thy kiss,
Who dying blessed thee for that bygone bliss, —
I pray thee do not bar my presence, quite,
From thy new life, so full of new delight.

I would not vex thee, waiting by thy side ;
My shadow should not chill thy fair young bride ;
Only bethink thee how alone I lie ! —
To die and be forgotten were to die
A double death ; and I deserve of thee
Some grace of memory, fair howe'er she be.

AFTER THE MOUNTAINS.

[To L. C. B.]

IN my dreams I see the hill-tops
Where the cloudy pathways led,
You and I have trod together
In the days that now are dead.

Still I see their shining splendors
Height in height before me rise,
And the radiance of their glory
Streams across my half-shut eyes.

In my dreams you are beside me, —
Still I hear your tender tone,
And your dear eyes light my darkness
Till I am no more alone,

For with memories I am haunted,
And the silence seems to beat
With the music of your talking
And the coming of your feet.

ALONE BY THE BAY.

HE is gone. O my heart, he is gone ;
And the sea remains and the sky,
And the skiffs flit in and out,
And the white-winged yachts go by.

The waves run purple and green,
And the sunshine glints and glows,
And freshly across the Bay
The breath of the morning blows.

Ah, it was better last night,
When the dark shut down on the main,
And the phantom fleet lay still,
And I heard the waves complain ;

For the sadness that dwells in my heart,
And the rune of their endless woe, —
Their longing and void and despair, —
Kept time in their ebb and flow.

MIDSUMMER IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE royalty of midsummer is here !
With daisy blooms the meadow lands are white ;
And over them the birds chant their delight,
And the blue, listening heavens bend to hear.

Within the lily's painted cup the bee
Swings drowsily, and dreams about the rose
He loved in June, and how her leaves repose
Where none can find them save the winds and he.

The trees are heavy with their wealth of green ;
And under them the waiting maidens walk,
And fill the idle hours with girlish talk
Of such a knight as never girl has seen, —

How he is noble, good, and princely tall ;
And one day he will come from his far place,
And read the blushes in his true love's face,
And she will rise and follow at his call.

And then I see a little painted boat,
Its white sails set to seek the summer sea,
And in that boat two lovers, young and free,
With favoring winds, 'neath smiling skies afloat ;

And all the proud midsummer's glow is come,
And all the joy of flower and bird and bee,
And all the deeper joy when he and she,
Their hearts' midsummer found, with bliss are dumb.

AT ETRETAT.

THE ocean beats against the stern, dumb shore
The stormy passion of its mighty heart, —
The sky, where no stars shine, is black above,
And thou and I sit from the world apart.

We two, with lives no star of hope makes bright, —
Whom bliss forgets, and joy no longer mocks, —
Hark to the wind's wild cry, the sea's complaint,
And break with wind and sea against the rocks.

Sore-wounded, hurled on the dark shore of Fate,
We stretch out helpless hands, and cry in vain, —
Our joy went forth, white-sailed, at dawn of day;
To-night is pitiless for all our pain.

We are not glad of any morn to come,
Since that winged joy we never more shall see, —
But in the passion of the winds and waves
Something there seems akin to thee and me.

They call! Shall we not go, out on that tide,
To touch, perchance, some shore where tempests cease,
Where no wind blows, and storm-torn souls forget
Their past disasters in that utmost peace?

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

NOT a hand has lifted the latchet
Since she went out of the door, —
No footstep shall cross the threshold,
Since she can come in no more.

There is rust upon locks and hinges,
And mold and blight on the walls,
And silence faints in the chambers,
And darkness waits in the halls, —

Waits, as all things have waited,
Since she went, that day of spring,
Borne in her pallid splendor,
To dwell in the Court of the King:

With lilies on brow and bosom,
With robes of silken sheen,
And her wonderful frozen beauty
The lilies and silk between.

Red roses she left behind her,
But they died long, long ago, —
'Twas the odorous ghost of a blossom
That seemed through the dusk to glow.

The garments she left mock the shadows
With hints of womanly grace,
And her image swims in the mirror
That was so used to her face.

The birds make insolent music
Where the sunshine riots outside;
And the winds are merry and wanton,
With the summer's pomp and pride.

But into this desolate mansion,
Where Love has closed the door,
Nor sunshine nor summer shall enter,
Since she can come in no more.

"SHE WAS WON IN AN IDLE DAY."

SHE was won in an idle day, —
Won when the roses were red in June,
And the world was set to a drowsy tune, —
Won by a lover who rode away.

Summer things basked in the summer sun;
Through the roses a vagrant wind
Stole, their passionate hearts to find,
Found them, and kissed them, and then was gone.

Wooed by the June day's fervid breath,
Violets opened their violet eyes,
Gazed too long at the ardent skies,
And swooned with the dying day to death.

Nothing was earnest, and nothing was true,—
Winds were wanton, and flowers were frail;
And the idle lover who told his tale,
Warmed by the June sun through and through,

Kissed her lips as the wind the rose, —
Kissed them for joy in the summer day, —
And then was ready to ride away
When over the night the moon arose.

The violets died with the day's last breath;
The roses slept when the wind was low;
What chanced to the butterflies, who can know?
But she — oh, pity her — waits for death!

A LIFE'S LOSS.

DO you remember the summer day
You found me down by the ruined mill?
The skies were blue, and the waters bright,
And shadows glanced on the windy hill,
And the stream moaned on.

You sat by my side on the moss-grown log,
Where one whom I loved last night had stood, —
I heard his voice, like an undertone,
While you talked to me in that solitude,
And the stream moaned on.

You did not tell me your heart was mine, —
You only said that my face was fair,
That silks and satins should robe my form,
And jewels should flash among my hair,
And the stream moaned on.

You went away with that careless air,
And smiled as you uttered your light good-by,
But the wind stole down from the frowning hill,
And stood at my side with a gasping sigh,
And the stream moaned on.

You remember the pomp of our bridal morn, —
The jewels that mocked the bright sunshine,
The rustling silks, the ringing mirth,
The flush of roses, the flow of wine, —
While the crowd looked on.

I saw a presence they did not see, —
A guest whom they knew not of was there, —
Heart of my heart, he came to mock
My bridal vows with his pale despair,
And my soul moaned on.

You won, that day, what you bargained for, —
My hair to braid your jewels in,
My form to deck with your silken robes,
My face to show to your haughty kin,
But my soul moaned on.

Talk not of love, — you have come too late!
You cannot dispel my heart's eclipse, —
Where your image should be the dead is shrined,
And no voice cries from the death-cold lips,
Though my soul moans on.

Some summer day I shall wander down
Where the waters flow by the ruined mill, —
Where the shadows come, and the shadows go,
There at the foot of the windy hill,
And the stream moans on.

You will find me there, 'neath the whispering wave,
Colder and stiller than ever before, —
The dreams I dreamed and the hopes I hoped
Will be hushed to silence for evermore,
Though the stream moan on.

THE SINGER.

WITHIN the crimson gloom
Of that dim, shaded room
I heard a singer sing.

She sang of life and death,
Of joys that end with breath,
And joys the end doth bring;

Of passion's bitter pain,
And memory's tears like rain,
Which will not cease to flow;

Of the deep grave's delights,
Where through long days and nights
They hear the green things grow,

Cool-rooted flowers, which come
So near to that still home,
Their ways the dead must know;

And shivers in the grass,
When winds of summer pass,
And whisper, as they go,

Of the mad life above,
Where men like masquers move ;
Or are they ghosts? — who knows? —

Sad ghosts who cannot die,
And watch slow years go by
Amid those painted shows.

Who knows? For on her tongue
What never may be sung
Seemed trembling, and we wait

To catch the strain complete,
More full, but not more sweet,
Beyond the golden gate.

HOW LONG?

IF on my grave the summer grass were growing,
Or heedless winter winds across it blowing,
Through joyous June or desolate December,
How long, Sweetheart, how long would you remember,
How long, dear love, how long?

For brightest eyes would open to the summer,
And sweetest smiles would greet the sweet newcomer,
And on young lips grow kisses for the taking
When all the summer buds to bloom are breaking,—
How long, dear love, how long?

To that dim land where sad-eyed ghosts walk only,
Where lips are cold, and waiting hearts are lonely,
I would not call you from your youth's warm blisses;
Fill up your glass and crown it with new kisses, —
How long, dear love, how long?

Too gay, in June, you might be to regret me,
And living lips might woo you to forget me;
But, ah, Sweetheart, I think you would remember
When winds were weary in your life's December, —
So long, dear love, so long!

THE SONG OF A SUMMER.

I PLUCKED an apple from off a tree,
Golden and rosy and fair to see, —
The sunshine had fed it with warmth and light,
The dews had freshened it night by night,
And high on the topmost bough it grew,
Where the winds of Heaven about it blew;
And while the mornings were soft and young
The wild birds circled, and soared, and sung, —
There, in the storm and calm and shine,
It ripened and brightened, this apple of mine,
Till the day I plucked it from off the tree,
Golden and rosy and fair to see.

How could I guess 'neath that daintiest rind
That the core of sweetness I hoped to find —
The innermost, hidden heart of the bliss,
Which dews and winds and the sunshine's kiss
Had tended and fostered by day and night —
Was black with mildew, and bitter with blight;
Golden and rosy and fair of skin,
Nothing but ashes and ruin within?
Ah, never again, with toil and pain,
Will I strive the topmost bough to gain, —
Though its wind-swung apples are fair to see,
On a lower branch is the fruit for me.

IF.

WHAT had I been, lost Love, if you had loved me?
A woman, smiling as the smiling May, —
As gay of heart as birds that carol gaily
Their sweet young songs to usher in the day —

As ardent as the skies that brood and brighten
O'er the warm fields in summer's happy prime, —
As tender as the veiling grace that softens
The harshest shapes in twilight's tender time.

Like the soft dusk I would have veiled your harshness
With tendernesses that were not your due, —
Your very faults had blossomed into virtues
Had you known how to love me and be true.

It had been well for you, — for me how blessèd!
But shall we ask the wind to blow for aye
From one same quarter, — keep at full for ever
The white moon smiling in a changeless sky?

Change is the law of wind and moon and lover, —
And yet, I think, lost Love, had you been true,
Some golden fruits had ripened for your plucking
You will not find in gardens that are new.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

YES, all is ended now, for I have weighed thee, —
Weighed the light love that has been held so dear, —
Weighed word and look and smile, that have betrayed thee,
The careless grace that was not worth a tear.

Holding these scales, I marvel at the anguish
For thing so slight that long my heart has torn, —
For God's great sun the prisoner's eyes might languish.
Not for a torch by some chance passer borne.

I do not blame thee for thy heedless playing
On the strong chords whose answer was so full, —
Do children care, through daisied meadows straying,
What hap befalls the blossoms that they pull?

Go on, gay trifler! Take thy childish pleasure:
On thee, for thee, may summer always shine:
Too stern were Justice, should she seek to measure
Thy fitful love by the strong pain of mine.

AT THE LAST.

COME once, just once, dear Love, when I am dead, —
Ah God, I would it were this hour, to-night, —
And look your last upon the frozen face
That was to you a summer's brief delight.

The silent lips will not entreat you then,
Nor the eyes vex you with unwelcome tears:
The low, sad voice will utter no complaint,
Nor the heart tremble with its restless fears.

I shall be still, — you will forgive me then
For all that I have been, or failed to be, —
Say, as you look, "Poor Heart, she loved me well;
Will any other be so true to me?"

Then bend and kiss the lips that will not speak, —
One little kiss for all the dear, dead days, —
Say once, "God rest her soul!" then go in peace, —
No haunting ghost shall meet you in your ways.

WHAT SHE SAID IN HER TOMB.

NOW, at last, I lie asleep
Where no morrows break, —
Why take heed to tread so soft? —
Fear you lest I wake?

Time there was when I was red
As a rose in June
With the kisses of your lips, —
Ah, they failed me soon.

Now they would not warm my mouth
Though they fell like rain:
I am marble, dear; and they
Marble cannot stain.

Ah, if you had loved me more,
Been content to wait,
Some time you had found the key
To Love's inmost gate.

Why, indeed, should any man
Wait for Autumn days,
When the present Summer wooes
To her rosy ways?

Only, — now I lie here dead ;
I shall not awake,
And you need not tread so soft
For my deaf ears' sake.

A SUMMER'S GHOST.

OF that old Summer can you still recall
The pomp wherewith the strong sun rose and set:
How bright the moon shone on the shining fields,
What wild, sweet blossoms with the dew were wet?

Can you still hear the merry robins sing,
And see the brave red lilies gleam and glow,
The waiting wealth of bloom, the reckless bees
That woo their wild-flower loves, and sting, and go?

Can you still hear the waves that round the shore
Broke in soft joy, and told delusive tales, —
"We go, but we return: Love comes and goes;
And eyes that watch see homeward-faring sails."

"'T was thus in other seasons!" Ah, may be!
But I forget them, and remember this, —
A brief, warm season, and a fond, brief love,
And cold, white Winter after bloom and bliss.

LOVER AND FRIEND HAST THOU PUT FAR FROM ME.

PSALM lxxxviii. 18.

I HEAR the soft September rain intone,
And cheerful crickets chirping in the grass —
I bow my head, I, who am all alone:
The light winds see, and shiver as they pass.

No other thing is so bereft as I, —
The rain-drops fall, and mingle as they fall, —
The chirping cricket knows his neighbor nigh, —
Leaves sway responsive to the light wind's call.

But Friend and Lover Thou hast put afar,
And left me only Thy great, solemn sky, —
I try to pierce beyond the farthest star
To search Thee out, and find Thee ere I die;

But dim my vision is, or Thou dost hide
Thy sacred splendor from my yearning eyes:
Be pitiful, O God, and open wide
To me, bereft, Thy heavenly Paradise.

Give me one glimpse of that sweet, far-off rest, —
  Then I can bear Earth's solitude again ;
My soul, returning from that heavenly quest,
  Shall smile, triumphant, at each transient pain.

Nor would I vex my heart with grief or strife,
  Though Friend and Lover Thou hast put afar,
If I could see, through my worn tent of Life,
  The steadfast shining of Thy morning star.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES.

BEAUTY for ashes thou hast brought me, dear!
A time there was when all my soul lay waste,
As ere the dawn the earth lies dark and drear,
Whereto the golden feet of morn make haste.

Like morn thou camest, blessings in thy hands,
And gracious pity round thine ardent mouth, —
Like dews of morning upon waiting lands,
Thy tender tears refreshed my spirit's drouth.

To-day is calm. Far off the tempest raves
That long ago swept dead men to the shore, —
I can forget the madness of the waves, —
Against my hopes and me they break no more.

White butterflies flit shining in the sun, —
Red roses burst to bloom upon the tree, —
Birds call to birds till the glad day is done,
The day of beauty thou hast brought to me.

Shall I forget, O gentle heart and true,
How thy fair dawn has risen on my night, —
Turned dark to day, all golden through and through, —
From soil of grief won bloom of new delight?

TO MY HEART.

IN thy long, lonely times, poor aching heart!
When days are slow, and silent nights are sad,
Take cheer, weak heart, remember and be glad,
For some one loved thee.

Some one, indeed, who cared for fading face,
For time-touched hair, and weary-falling arm,
And in thy very sadness found a charm
To make him love thee.

God knows thy days are desolate, poor heart!
As thou dost sit alone, and dumbly wait
For what comes not, or comes, alas! too late,
But some one loved thee.

Take cheer, poor heart, remembering what he said,
And how of thy lost youth he missed no grace,
But saw some subtler beauty in thy face,
So well he loved thee.

It may be, on Time's farther shore, the dead
Love the sweet shades of those they missed on this,
And dream, in heavenly rest, of earth's lost bliss, —
So he shall love thee.

Till then take cheer, poor, silent, aching heart;
Content thee with the face he once found fair,
Mourn not for fading bloom or time-touched hair,
Since he hath loved thee.

ALIEN WATERS.

I WANDERED along beside the alien waters,
For summer suns were warm, and winds were dead:
Fields fair as hope were stretching on before me,
Forbidden paths were pleasant to my tread.

From boughs that hung between me and the heavens
I gathered summer fruitage, red and gold:
For me, the idle singers sang of pleasure:
My days went by like stories that are told.

On my rose-tree grew roses for my plucking,
As red as love, or pale as tender pain, —
I found no thorns to vex me in my garlands:
Each day was good, and no rose bloomed in vain.

Sometimes I danced, as in a dream, to music,
And kept quick time with many flying feet,
And some one praised me in the music's pauses,
And very young was life, and love was sweet.

How could I listen to the low voice calling,
"Come hither, — leave thy music and thy mirth?"
How could I stop to hear of far-off Heaven?
I lived, and loved, and was a child of earth.

Then came a hand and took away my treasures,
Dimmed my fine gold, cut my fair rose-tree down,
Changed my dance music into notes of wailing,
Quenched the bright day, and turned my green fields brown.

Till, walking lonely through the empty places
Where Love and I no more kept holiday,
My sad eyes, growing wonted to the darkness,
Beheld a new light shining far away:

And I could bear my hopes should lie around me,
Dead like my roses, fall'n before their time, —
For well I knew some tender Spring would raise them
To brighter blossoming in Hope's fair clime.

LOOKING BACK.

I MAY live long, but some old days
Of dear, deep joy akin to pain, —
Some suns that set on woodland ways
Will never rise for me again.
By shining sea, and glad, green shore
That frolic waves ran home to kiss,
Some words I heard that nevermore
Will thrill me with their mystic bliss.

Oh Love, still throbs your living heart, —
You have not crossed death's sullen tide:
A deeper deep holds us apart:
We were more near if you had died, —
If you had died in those old days
When light was on the shining sea,
And all the fragrant woodland ways
Were paths of hope for you and me.

Dead leaves are in those woodland ways, —
Cold are the lips that used to kiss, —
'T were idle to recall those days,
Or sigh for all that vanished bliss.

Do you still wear your old-time grace,
And charm new loves with ancient wiles?
Could I but watch your faithless face,
I 'd know the meaning of your smiles.

A PROBLEM.

MY darling has a merry eye,
And voice like silver bells:
How shall I win her, prithee, say, —
By what magic spells?

If I frown, she shakes her head;
If I weep, she smiles:
Time would fail me to recount
All her wilful wiles.

She flouts me so, — she stings me so, —
Yet will not let me stir, —
In vain I try to pass her by,
My little chestnut bur.

When I yield to every whim,
She straight begins to pout.
Teach me how to read my love,
How to find her out!

For flowers she gives me thistle-blooms, —
Her turtle-doves are crows, —
I am the groaning weather-vane,
And she the wind that blows.

My little love! My teasing love!
Was woman made for man, —
A rose that blossomed from his side?
Believe it — those who can.

AT A WINDOW.

JUST a flower on the window-sill,
That a kindly visitor's hand has brought,
And the lame boy, sitting there patient and still,
Tastes the summer with beauty fraught,
And greets the June and its roses at will,
And gathers a blossom with every thought.

Just a bird, with its bright, quick eye
Glancing in at the window there,
Dropping a note of song from the sky,
And off, swift-winged, on the summer air;
But a thousand singers with him go by.
And sing, and the boy is well aware.

If the summer comes with a single rose,
And in one bird's note sings the summer choir,
And the whole bright world around him glows
At the summoning breath of a boy's desire,
Shall we wait for reasons, and ask, "Who knows?"
Of souls aglow with the heavenly fire?

TO A LADY IN A PICTURE.

SITTING in that picture,
Smiling night and day,
Do you never weary,
Long to weep or pray?

Though your dress is velvet,
And your hair is gold,
I see something in your eyes
That you have not told.

MY CAPTIVE.

I CAUGHT a little bird, and I shut him in a cage,
And I said, "Now, my pet, I love thee dearly.
Fold thy bright wings, nor let thy fancy range:
Thou 'rt mine own, so sing, I pray thee, cheerly."

But, oh, the little bird, he fluttered still his wings,
And with bright, wild eyes he never ceased to watch me,
And I only heard him say, "'T is a free heart that sings, —
Open my door, and I 'll sing till you catch me."

I brought him dainty food, and I soothed him long and well,
But the timid little heart ceased not to tremble.
I decked his cage with flowers, with leaves I wrought a spell,
By such fond device his capture to dissemble.

But still he missed above him the far and shining sky,
And still he missed about him the free wind's blowing.
He beat his little wings, for he had no space to fly,
And his bright, wild eyes like twin stars were glowing.

And I heard his little heart, as it throbbed so loud and fast,
And my love and my pity wrought together,
Till I opened wide his door, and I said, "Thy thraldom 's past.
Fly away, bright wings, and seek the summer weather."

But now I think he loves me, since I have made him free, —
For often, oftentimes, at daybreak or at gloaming,
I think I hear a song that seems to be for me, —
"Throw wide the door, to keep a heart from roaming."

ROSES.

HAROLD, on a summer day,
Gave me roses for my hair, —
Roses red, and roses white,
As if pale with Love's despair.

White ones for my brow, he said,
Red to blush beside my cheek, —
And a bud to whisper me
Something that he dared not speak.

Ah, that summer day is over,
And its brightness comes not back:
Harold's roses something held
Other roses seemed to lack.

Blossoms bloom along my path
Red and white as those were then, —
But the words that Harold spoke
I can never hear again.

DOWN THE RIVER.

TO E. M. H.

DOWN the wonderful, magical river
We drifted that summer night;
And we almost heard the shiver
Of the wind through the trees on our right;
And the moon-rays seemed to quiver
On your face, like the moonlight white.

And the tide with a soft resistance
Withstood our keel from below;
But the yacht with its firm insistence
Dropped down to the city below;
And we saw in the mystical distance
The white skiffs come and go.

And your eyes in the moonlight tender
Had things as tender to say;
And your hand, so timid and slender,
In mine forgetfully lay;
And how my dream shall I render,
As we drifted into the bay?

But there were the lights of the city,
And in vain was the white moon white;
And the town, with its glare, had no pity
For the dream of a summer night;
So I turn the dream to a ditty
To sing to you, Heart's Delight!

LOVE'S LAND.

IN the South is Love's land,
Where the roses blow,
Where the Summer lingers
Fearless of the snow.
There no Winter chills it,
So its life is long, —
Gentle breezes fan it,
Age but makes it strong.

"Nay, fresh roses wither
Where the sun is hot, —
Not in torrid regions
Blooms Forget-me-not.
Love 's a tender blossom
Which the Winter chills,
But the eager Summer
Kisses it, and kills."

HER WINDOW.

OUT of her window, that morn of grace,
She leaned her radiant, beautiful face, —
The sun, ashamed, went into a cloud;
But, glad of the dawning, the birds sang loud.

A laggard went up the garden walk,
And lingered to hear the murmuring talk
Of flower and bee and every comer
That fluttered along in front of the summer.

He quaffed the wine of the morning air,
And felt with a thrill that the day was fair —
Then he raised his eyes to her window's height, —
"Ah, me," he said, "but the sun is bright!"

A MADRIGAL.

LOVE is a day, Sweetheart, shining and bright:
It hath its rose-dawn ere the morning light;
Its glow and glory of the sudden sun;
Its noon-tide heat as the swift hours wear on;
Its fall of dew, and silver-lighted night, —
Love is a day. Sweetheart, shining and bright.

Love is a year, Beloved, bitter and brief:
It hath its spring of bud, and bloom and leaf;
Its summer burning from the fervid South
Till all the fields lie parched and faint with drouth;
Its autumn, when the leaves sweep down the gale,
When skies are grey, and heart and spirit fail;
Its winter white with snow, more white with grief, —
Love is a year, Beloved, bitter and brief.

Love is a life, Sweetheart, ending in death:
Is it worth while to mourn its fleeting breath,
Light-footed youth, or sad, fore-casting prime,
Joy of young hope, or grief of later time?
What pain or pleasure stays its parting breath?
Love is a life, Sweetheart, ending in death.

QUESTION.

DEAR and blessed dead ones, can you look and listen
To the sighing and the moaning down here below?
Does it make a discord in the hymns of Heaven, —
The discord that jangles in the life you used to know?

When we pray our prayers to the great God above you,
Does the echo of our praying ever glance aside your way?
Do you know the thing we ask for, and wish that you could give it,
You, whose hearts ached with wishing in your own little day?

Are your ears deaf with praises, you blessed dead of Heaven,
And your eyes blind with glory, that you cannot see our pain?
If you saw, if you heard, you would weep among the angels,
And the praises and the glory would be for you in vain.

Yet He listens to our praying, the great God of pity,
As He fills with pain the measure of our Life's little day, —
Could He bear to sit and shine there, on His white throne in Heaven,
But that He sees the end, while we only see the way?

I FAIN WOULD GO.

AWAY from carking care,
From passion and despair,
From hopes that but delude,
And blasts that are too rude, —
From friendships that betray,
And joys that pass away,
And love that turns to hate
In hearts left desolate,
I fain would go.

From weary days and nights,
And ghosts of lost delights, —
Fair phantoms of dead days,
That wander through old ways, —
From parting's bitter pain,
And meeting's transient gain,
And death that mocks us so,
With glad life's overthrow, —
I fain would go,

To some fair land and far,
Where all my lost ones are,
Where smiles shall bloom anew,
And friendship shall be true,
Where falls no weary night,
Since God Himself is light, —
Across the soundless sea
To that far land, and free,
I fain would go.

THE SPRING IS LATE.

SHE stood alone amidst the April fields, —
Brown, sodden fields, all desolate and bare, —
"The spring is late," she said, — "the faithless spring,
That should have come to make the meadows fair.

"Their sweet South left too soon, among the trees
The birds, bewildered, flutter to and fro;
For them no green boughs wait, — their memories
Of last year's April had deceived them so.

"From 'neath a sheltering pine some tender buds
Looked out, and saw the hollows filled with snow;
On such a frozen world they closed their eyes;
When spring is cold, how can the blossoms blow?"

She watched the homeless birds, the slow, sad spring,
The barren fields, and shivering, naked trees:
"Thus God has dealt with me, his child," she said, —
I wait my spring-time, and am cold like these.

"To them will come the fulness of their time;
Their spring, though late, will make the meadows fair;
Shall I, who wait like them, like them be blest?
I am His own, — doth not my Father care?"

SELFISH PRAYER.

HOW we, poor players on Life's little stage,
Thrust blindly at each other in our rage,
Quarrel and fret, yet rashly dare to pray
To God to help us on our selfish way.

We think to move Him with our prayer and praise,
To serve our needs; as in the old Greek days
Their gods came down and mingled in the fight
With mightier arms the flying foe to smite.

The laughter of those gods pealed down to men,
For Heaven was but earth's upper story then
Where goddesses about an apple strove,
And the high gods fell humanly in love.

We own a God whose presence fills the sky, —
Whose sleepless eyes behold the worlds roll by;
Shall not His memory number, one by one,
The sons of men, who calls them each His son?

AD TE DOMINE.

O THOU who sendest dewdrops to the garden,
Until each fragrant bud receives its own,
Canst Thou not look on human hearts and pardon
To waiting loneliness its bitter moan?

The flowers can drink the dawn, — it hastens to them;
But hearts athirst wait sadly for their hour,
For the sweet gift that may, perchance, undo them, —
Too fatal sweet a dew for human flower.

IF I COULD KEEP HER SO.

JUST a little baby, lying in my arms, —
Would that I could keep you, with your baby charms;
Helpless, clinging fingers, downy, golden hair,
Where the sunshine lingers, caught from otherwhere;
Blue eyes asking questions, lips that cannot speak,
Roly-poly shoulders, dimple in your cheek;
Dainty little blossom in a world of woe,
Thus I fain would keep you, for I love you so.

Roguish little damsel, scarcely six years old, —
Feet that never weary, hair of deeper gold;
Restless, busy fingers all the time at play,
Tongue that never ceases talking all the day;
Blue eyes learning wonders of the world about,
Here you come to tell them, — what an eager shout! —
Winsome little damsel, all the neighbors know;
Thus I long to keep you, for I love you so.

Sober little schoolgirl, with your strap of books,
And such grave importance in your puzzled looks;
Solving weary problems, poring over sums,
Yet with tooth for sponge-cake and for sugar-plums;

Reading books of romance in your bed at night,
Waking up to study with the morning light;
Anxious as to ribbons, deft to tie a bow,
Full of contradictions, — I would keep you so.

Sweet and thoughtful maiden, sitting by my side,
All the world's before you, and the world is wide;
Hearts are there for winning, hearts are there to break,
Has your own, shy maiden, just begun to wake?
Is that rose of dawning glowing on your cheek
Telling us in blushes what you will not speak?
Shy and tender maiden, I would fain forego
All the golden future, just to keep you so.

Ah! the listening angels saw that she was fair,
Ripe for rare unfolding in the upper air;
Now the rose of dawning turns to lily white,
And the close-shut eyelids veil the eyes from sight;
All the past I summon as I kiss her brow, —
Babe, and child, and maiden, all are with me now.
Though my heart is breaking, yet God's love I know, —
Safe among the angels, I would keep her so.

ANNIE'S DAUGHTER.

THE lingering charm of a dream that has fled,
The rose's breath when the rose is dead,
The echo that lives when the tune is done,
The sunset glories that follow the sun,
Every thing tender and every thing fair
That was, and is not, and yet is there, —
I think of them all when I look in these eyes,
And see the old smile to the young lips rise.

I remember the lilacs, all purple and white,
And the turf at the feet of my heart's delight,
Sprinkled with daisies and violets sweet —
Daintiest floor for the daintiest feet —
And the face that was fond, and foolish, and fair.
And the golden grace of the floating hair,
And the lips where the glad smiles came and went,
And the lashes that shaded the eyes' content.

I remember the pledge of the red young lips
And the shy, soft touch of the finger-tips,
And the kisses I stole, and the words we spoke,
And the ring I gave, and the coin we broke,

And the love that never should change or fail
Though the earth stood still or the stars turned pale;
And again I stand, when I see these eyes,
A glad young Fool, in my Paradise.

For the earth and the stars remained as of old,
But the love that had been so warm grew cold.
Was it She? Was it I? — I don't remember:
Then it was June, — it is now December.
But again I dream the old dream over,
My Annie is young, and I am her lover
When I look in this Annie's gentle eyes
And see the old smile to the young lips rise.

LOOKING INTO THE WELL.

UP in the maples the robins sung.
The winds blew over the locusts high.
And along the path by their boughs o'erhung
We wandered gaily, Lulu and I, —
Wandered along in pleasant talk,
Pausing our nursery tales to tell,
Till we came to the end of the shaded walk
And sat, at last, by the moss-grown well.
She was a child, and so was I:
It mattered not that we told our love, —
Whispered it there, with no one nigh
Save birds that sang in the trees above.
I looked down into her shy blue eyes,
She at my face in the shaded well:
I saw the glow to her fair cheek rise,
Like pink in the heart of an ocean shell.

Again in the trees the robins sung:
The gold had deepened upon her hair:
The locusts over the pathway hung
To look at her face so still and fair.
I said no word: I sat by her side
Contented to hold her hand in mine
Dreaming of love and a fair young bride, —
Visions that truth would have made divine.

The robin's song took a clearer tone,
The sky was a tenderer, deeper blue:
Her face in the limpid waters shone, —
I thought her eyes were holy and true.

I walked alone to the shaded well
When locusts bloomed in the next year's June, —
The shadows along my pathway fell,
The wild birds sang a sorrowful tune.
She had given her shining hair's young gold,
Her holy brow and her eyes of blue,
The form I had scarcely dared to fold,
To a wealthy suitor who came to woo:
Had sold, for jewels and land and name,
Youth and beauty and love and grace, —
Alone I cursed the sin and shame,
And started to see my own dark face
Mirrored there in the well below,
With its haggard cheek and its lines of care,
Where I once had seen a girlish brow
And shy blue eyes and golden hair.

Years have passed since that summer day
Went over the hills with its silent tread:
I walk alone where its glory lay, —
I am lonely, and Lulu is dead.

Dust is thick on her shining hair,
A shroud is folded across her breast,
The winds blow over the locusts where
She lies at last, alone and at rest.
Youth and beauty, and love and grace,
Wealth and station, joy and pain, —
If she dream at all in that lonely place,
She will know, at length, that her life was vain.

I do not think of her heart's disgrace,
Looking into the waters there;
For I seem to see once more a face
With shy blue eyes and golden hair.
Out among men she walks by my side —
For me she lives whom the world calls dead, —
I talk at night to my shadow bride,
And pillow in dreams her golden head.
They broke her heart, — so the gossips tell, —
Who sold her hand for wealth and a name;
But I see her face in the cool, deep well,
And its innocent beauty is still the same.

LIKE A CHILD.

PLAYING there in the sun, chasing the butterflies,
Ca.ching his golden toy, holding it fast till it dies,
Singing to match the birds, calling the robins at will,
Glancing here and there, never a moment still, —
Like a child.

Going to school at last, learning to read and write,
Puzzled over his slate, busy from morn till night,
Striving to win a prize, careless when it is won,
Finding his joy in the strife, not in the thing that 's done.

Busy in eager trade, buying, and selling again,
Chasing a golden prize, glad of a transient gain,
Always beginning anew, never the long task done,
Just as it used to be with the butterfly in the sun.

Seeking a woman's heart, winning it for his own,
Then, too busy for love, letting it turn to stone:
Sure of his plighted troth, what more had a wife to ask?
Is he not doing for her each day his daily task?

A child, to pine and complain, — a child, to grow so pale, —
For want of some foolish words shall the faith of a woman fail?

Words! he said them once, — what need of any thing more?
Does one who has entered a room go back and wait at the door?

Baby Mary and Kate never can climb his knee:
Motherly arms are open, — but "Father's busy, you see."
Too busy to stop to hear a babble of broken talk,
To mend the jumping-jack or make the new doll walk.

So busy that when Death comes he pleads for a little delay,
If not to finish his work, at least a word to say, —
A word to wife and child, a sentence to tell the truth,
That he loves them now, at the last, with the passionate heart of youth.

The kisses of Death are cold, and they turn his lips to stone:
Out of the warm, bright world the man goes all alone.
Do angels wait for him there, over the soundless sea?
He goes, as he came, all helpless, to a new world's mystery —
Like a child.

A SONG IN THE WOOD.

I FOUND a shy little violet root
Half hid in the woods, on a day of spring,
And a bird flew over, and looked at it, too,
And for joy, as he looked, he began to sing.

The sky was the tenderest blue above, —
And the flower like a bit of the sky below;
And between them the wonderful winds of God
On heavenly errands went to and fro.

Away from the summer, and out of the South
The bird has followed a whisper true,
As out from the brown and desolate sod
Stepped the shy little blossom, with eyes of blue.

And he sang to her, in the young spring day,
Of all the joy in the world astir;
And her beauty and fragrance answered him,
While the spring and he bent over her.

MY BOY.

I HAD a little bird once,
But he has flown away.
I had a little boy once,
But ah, he did not stay.

What do they up in Heaven,
That Bird and Boy should fly,
And leave my home so empty
To seek the far-off sky?

What do they up in Heaven? —
Perchance the angels sing,
And, when they heard that music,
My Bird and Boy took wing.

The heavenly flowers bloom always,
The skies are always bright,
And all the little children
Play there from morn till night.

But do they never weary,
And long to go to rest,
Like little human children,
Upon a mother's breast?

My home and arms are empty,
My longing heart is sore,
Since they who sought the summer
Come back to me no more.

How softly falls the twilight,—
The sunset fires are out:
A wind that comes from Heaven
Blows slowly round about.

I close my eyes and listen,
And presently I hear
A small voice through the darkness
Sigh, "Mother — I am near.

"Come, take me in, dear mother,
And rock me as of old:
I used to be so happy
Within your tender hold!

"There sorrow cannot find me,
And pain shall pass me by,—
When you enfold who love me,
What danger can come nigh?

"So safe I was in Heaven,
So bright the shining days!
But, from afar, your weeping
Disturbed the hymns of praise,

"Till the dear Lord and gentle
Sent me to soothe your pain,
And, if you fain would keep me,
He bids me to remain."

I kissed his tender eyelids,
I laid him on my heart;
And yet, when came the dawning,
I prayed him to depart.

I feared the unknown future,
I feared the paths untried, —
How dared I keep my darling
When Heaven was opened wide?

But, ah, my heart is lonely
Since Boy and Bird have fled, —
I hear the silence only,
And wish that I were dead.

TROTHPLIGHT.

[*For the Golden Wedding of a Husband thirty-seven years blind.*]

I BROUGHT her home, my bonny bride,
Just fifty years ago;
Her eyes were bright,
Her step was light,
Her voice was sweet and low.

In April was our wedding-day, —
The maiden month, you know,
Of tears and smiles,
And wilful wiles,
And flowers that spring from snow.

My love cast down her dear, dark eyes
As if in fain would hide
From my fond sight
Her own delight,
Half shy yet happy bride.

But blushes told the tale, instead,
As plain as words could speak
In dainty red
That overspread
My darling's dainty cheek.

For twice six years and more I watched
Her fairer grow each day, —
My babes were blest
Upon her breast,
And she was pure as they.

And then an angel touched my eyes,
And turned my day to night,
That fading charms
Or time's alarms
Might never vex my sight.

Thus sitting in the dark I see
My darling as of yore, —
With blushing face
And winsome grace,
Unchanged, for evermore.

Full fifty years of young and fair!
To her I pledge my vow
Whose spring-time grace
And April face
Have lasted until now.

THE HOUSE IN THE MEADOW.

IT stands in a sunny meadow,
The house so mossy and brown,
With its cumbrous old stone chimneys,
And the gray roof sloping down.

The trees fold their green arms round it,
The trees a century old;
And the winds go chaunting through them,
And the sunbeams sift their gold.

The cowslips spring in the meadows,
The roses bloom on the hill,
And beside the brook in the pasture
The herds are feeding at will.

Within, in the wide old kitchen,
The old folk sit in the sun
That creeps through the sheltering woodbine
Till the day is almost done.

Their children grew up and left them, —
They sit in the sun alone,
And the old wife's ears are failing
As she harks to the well-known tone

That won her heart in her girlhood,
  That has soothed her in many a care,
And praises her now for the brightness
  Her old face used to wear.

She thinks again of her bridal,
  How, dressed in her robe of white,
She stood by her gay young lover
  In the morning's rosy light: —

Oh, the morning is rosy as ever,
  But the rose from her cheek has fled;
And the sunshine still is golden,
  But it shines on a silvered head.

And the girlhood dreams, once vanished,
  Come back in her winter time
Till her feeble pulses tremble
  With the thrill of spring-time's prime.

And, looking forth from the window,
  She thinks how the trees have grown
Since, clad in her bridal whiteness,
  She crossed the old door-stone.

Though dimmed her eyes' bright azure,
  And dimmed her hair's young gold,
The love in her girlhood plighted
  Has never grown dim nor cold.

They sat in peace in the sunshine
  Till the day was almost done,
And then, at its close, an angel
  Stole over the threshold stone.

He folded their hands together,
  He touched their eyelids with balm,
And their last breath floated outward
  Like the close of a solemn psalm.

Like a bridal pair they traversed
  The unseen, mystical road
That leads to the Beautiful City
  Whose Builder and Maker is God.

Perchance in that miracle country
  They will give her lost youth back,
And the flowers of the vanished spring-time
  Will bloom in the spirit's track.

One draught from the living waters
  Shall call back his manhood's prime;
And eternal years shall measure
  The love that outlasted time.

But the shapes that they left behind them,
The wrinkles and silver hair, —
Made holy to us by the kisses
The angel had printed there, —

We will hide away 'neath the willows
When the day is low in the west,
Where the sunbeams cannot find them
Nor the winds disturb their rest;

And we 'll suffer no tell-tale tombstone,
With its age and date, to rise
O'er the two who are old no longer
In the Father's house in the skies.

FROM DUSK TO DAWN.

IT was just at the close of a summer day,
When the fair, young moon in the east was up,
And falling, as falls the peace of God,
The dew dropped balm in the wild-flower's cup.

And soft south winds touched the weary brow
Of a woman who leaned on a cottage gate
And lingered to catch the low, sweet call
Of a late bird singing home to his mate.

From within she heard the household talk,
As if each to other were true and dear,
And after her, down the lonesome street,
Followed the sound of mirthful cheer.

They were blest, she knew, in their homely peace, —
A sad smile trembled about her mouth, —
"I am glad," she said, "that for some poor souls
There be full wells, though the rest have drouth."

She saw the children about the doors,
With fond young lips for mothers to kiss,
And from every home, as she passed along,
She caught some cadence of household bliss.

Till she came, at last, to her own low roof,
Where she and a ghost dwelt face to face,
The ghost of her days of joy and youth,
The only guest in that lonesome place.

They talked together of all the past, —
She and the ghost, in the white moonlight, —
Till the pale guest's face like an angel's grew,
An old-time glory had made it bright.

When the dawn arose, they both were gone, —
On the bed a shape like the woman's lay, —
But she, with the ghost of the gay, glad past,
To some land of shadows had wandered away :

A land where she found the lost again, —
Where youth was waiting, and love was sweet,
And all the joys she had buried once
Sprang up like blossoms about her feet.

THERE.

DO any hearts ache there, beyond the peaceful river?
Do fond souls wait, with longing in their eyes,
For those who come not, will not come, forever, —
For some wild hope whose dawn will never rise?

Do any love there still, beyond the silent river,
The ones they loved in vain this side its flow?
Does the old pain make their heart-strings ache and quiver? —
I shall go home, some day, go home and know.

The hill-tops are bright there, beyond the shining river,
And the long glad day, it never turns to night, —
They must be blest, indeed, to bear the light for ever,
Grief longs for darkness to hide its tears from sight.

Are tears turned to smiling, beyond the blessed river,
And mortal pain and passion drowned in its flow? —
Then all we who sit on its hither bank and shiver,
Let us rejoice, — we shall go home and know.

SOMEBODY'S CHILD.

JUST a picture of Somebody's child, —
Sweet face set in its golden hair,
Violet eyes, and cheeks of rose,
Rounded chin, with a dimple there,

Tender eyes where the shadows sleep,
Lit from within by a secret ray, —
Tender eyes that will shine like stars
When love and womanhood come this way:

Scarlet lips with a story to tell, —
Blessed be he who shall find it out,
Who shall learn the eyes' deep secret well,
And read the heart with never a doubt.

Then you will tremble, scarlet lips,
Then you will crimson, loveliest cheeks:
Eyes will brighten and blushes will burn
When the one true lover bends and speaks.

But she 's only a child now, as you see,
Only a child in her careless grace:
When Love and Womanhood come this way
Will any thing sadden the flower-like face?

A WOMAN'S WAITING.

UNDER the apple-tree blossoms, in May,
Robert and I watched the sun go down:
Behind us the road stretched back to the East,
On through the meadows to Danbury town.

Silent we sat, for our hearts were full,
Silently watched the reddening sky,
And saw the clouds across the west
Like the phantoms of ships sail silently.

Robert had come with a story to tell,
I knew it before he had said a word, —
It looked from his eyes, and it shadowed his face, —
He was going to march with the Twenty-third.

We had been neighbors from childhood up,
Gone to school by the self-same way,
Climbed the same steep woodland paths,
Knelt in the same old church to pray.

We had wandered together, boy and girl,
Where wild flowers grew and wild grapes hung,
Tasted the sweetness of summer days
When hearts were true and life was young.

But never a love word had crossed his lips,
Never a hint of pledge or vow,
Until, as the sun went down that night,
His tremulous kisses touched my brow: —

"Jenny," he said, "I 've a work to do
For God and my country and the right, —
True hearts, strong arms, are needed now, —
I must not linger when others fight.

"Will you give me a pledge to cheer me on, —
A hope to look forward to, by and by?
Will you wait for me, Jenny, till I come back?"
"I will wait," I answered, "until I die."

The May moon rose as we walked that night
Back through the meadows to Danbury town,
And one star rose and shone by her side, —
Calmly and sweetly they both looked down.

The scent of blossoms was in the air,
The sky was blue and the eve was bright,
And Robert said, as he walked by my side,
"Old Danbury town is fair to-night.

"I shall think of it, Jenny, when far away,
Placid and still 'neath the moon as now, —
I shall see it, Darling, in many a dream,
And you with the moonlight on your brow."

No matter what else were his parting words, —
They are mine to treasure until I die,
With the clinging kisses and lingering looks,
The tender pain of that fond good-bye.

I did not weep, — I tried to be brave:
I watched him until he was out of sight, —
Then suddenly all the world grew dark,
And I was blind in the bright May night.

Blind and helpless I slid to the ground
And lay with the night-dews on my hair,
Till the moon was down and the dawn was up,
And the fresh May morn rose clear and fair.

He was taken and I was left, —
Left to wait and to watch and pray, —
Till there came a message over the wires
Chilling the air of the August day: —

Killed in a skirmish eight or ten, —
Wounded and helpless as many more, —
All of them our Connecticut men, —
From the little town of Danbury, Four.

But I only saw a single name, —
Of one who was all the world to me:
I promised to wait for him till I died, —
O God, O Heaven, how long will it be?

1863.

JOHN A. ANDREW.

1867.

O LARGE of heart, and grand, and calm,
Who held the helm of state so long,
Our plaining mingles with our praise,
Our sorrow sanctifies our song.

Clear eyes, kind lips so silent now,
Ears deaf to all our worldly din,
Great soul which has not left its peer,
We would the grave-sod had shut in

Some lesser man, and we, to-day,
Had thy strong will to urge us on,
Thy brain to plan, thy hand to help,
Thy cheerful voice to say "well done!"

But whatsoe'er we do of good,
In doing it we honor thee;
We follow where our leader led, —
Can he look down from Heaven and see?

THE COUNTRY OF "IF."

THERE is not much, indeed, that I can say
Since "If" was the sole country of our dreams,
And at its gate one stood to bar the way
To that glad land, those silver-shining streams.

I know, dear Heart, how fair that country is, —
Its rivers flow through meadows green and still,
Its skies bend lovingly o'er lovers' bliss,
No cold winds blow there, and no winters chill.

There would we fain have wandered, thou and I, —
But the strong Angel met us at its gate:
He heeded not Love's prayer, or Passion's cry, —
"Oh, fools and mad," he said, "you come too late."

FOR CUPID DEAD.

WHEN Love is dead, what more but funeral rites, —
To lay his sweet corse lovingly to rest,
To cover him with rose and eglantine,
And all fair posies that he loved the best?

What more, but kisses for his close-shut eyes,
His cold, still lips that never more will speak, —
His hair, too bright for dust of death to dim,
The flush scarce faded from his frozen cheek?

What more, but tears that will not warm his brow,
Although they burn the eyes from whence they start?
No bitter weeping or more bitter words
Can rouse to one more throb that pulseless heart.

So dead he is, who once was so alive!
In summer, when the ardent days were long,
He was as warm as June, as gay and glad
As any bird that swelled its throat with song.

So dead! yet all things were his ministers, —
All birds and blossoms, and the joyous June:
Would they had died, and kept sweet Love alive!
Since he is gone, the world is out of tune.

WE LAY US DOWN TO SLEEP.

WE lay us down to sleep,
And leave to God the rest,
Whether to wake and weep
Or wake no more be best.

Why vex our souls with care?
The grave is cool and low, —
Have we found life so fair
That we should dread to go?

We 've kissed Love's sweet, red lips,
And left them sweet and red:
The rose the wild bee sips
Blooms on when he is dead.

Some faithful friends we 've found,
But they who love us best,
When we are under ground,
Will laugh on with the rest.

No task have we begun
But other hands can take:
No work beneath the sun
For which we need to wake.

Then hold us fast, sweet Death,
If so it seemeth best
To Him who gave us breath
That we should go to rest.

We lay us down to sleep,
Our weary eyes we close:
Whether to wake and weep
Or wake no more, He knows.

SONNETS.

THE NEW DAY.

WHEN the great sun sets the glad East aflame,
The lingering stars are swiftly put to flight;
For Day, triumphant, overthrows the night,
And mocks the lights that twinkled till he came.
The waning moon retires in sudden shame;
And all the air, from roseate height to height,
Quivers with wings of birds, that take the light
To jubilant music of one tender name.

So Thou hast risen, — Thou who art my day;
And every lesser light has ceased to shine.
Pale stars, confronted by this dawn of thine,
Like night and gloom and grief have passed away;
And yet my bliss I fear to call it mine,
Lest fresh foes lurk with unforeseen dismay.

ONE DREAD.

NO depth, dear Love, for thee is too profound;
There is no farthest height thou mayst not dare,
Nor shall thy wings fail in the upper air:
In funeral robe and wreath my past lies bound;
No old-time voice assails me with its sound
When thine I hear; no former joy seems fair;
And now one only thing could bring despair,
One grief like compassing seas my life surround,
One only terror in my way be met,
One great eclipse change my glad day to night,
One phantom only turn from red to white
The lips whereon thy lips have once been set:
Thou knowest well, dear Love, what that must be, —
The dread of some dark day unshared by thee.

AFAR.

WHERE Thou art not no day holds light for me,
The brightest noontide turns to midnight deep;
There no bird sings, but awesome shadows creep, —
Persistent ghosts that hold my memory,
And walk where Joy and Hope once walked with thee,
And in thy place their lonesome vigil keep, —
Sad shades that haunt the inmost ways of sleep,
No kindly morning ever bids them flee.

Those tireless footsteps, will they never cease?
Like crownless queens they tread their ancient ways, —
Pale phantoms of old dreams and vanished days, —
And mock my poor endeavors after peace.
Too long this Arctic night, too keen its cold;
Come back, strong sun, and warm me as of old!

LAST YEAR.

I.

YOU thought, O Love, you loved me then, I know;
For that I bless you, now when Love is cold,
Remembering how warm the tale you told,
While winds of autumn fitfully did blow,
And, by the sea's perpetual ebb and flow,
We wandered on together to behold
Noon's radiant splendor, or the sunset's gold,
Or beauty of still nights where moons hung low.

Your voice grew tender when you called my name;
I heard that voice to-day, — was it the same? —
The old-time music trembles in it yet.
Your touch thrilled through me like a sudden flame
And then Love's sweet and subtle madness came,
And glad lips clung that now to kiss forget.

II.

You surely must remember, though to-day
There is no spell to charm you in the past.
So dear the dream was that it could not last:
Too soon our pleasant skies were changed to gray;

The sun turned from our barren land away,
And all the leaves swept by us on the blast,
And all our hopes to that wild wind were cast —
For dead Love's soul there is no place to pray.

But still the old time lingers in our thought:
In our regretful dreams the old suns rise,
And from their shining, memory hath caught
Some lingering glory of that glad surprise
When Love rose on us like the sun, and brought
Our hearts their morning under last year's skies.

FIRST LOVE.

TIME was you heard the music of a sigh,
And Love awoke ; and with it Song was born, —
Song glad as young birds carol in the morn,
And tender as the blue and brooding sky,
When all the earth feels Spring's warm witchery,
And with fresh flowers her bosom doth adorn ;
And lovers love, and cannot love forlorn,
Since Love is of the gods, and may not die.

In after years may come some wildering light, —
Some sweet delusion, followed for a space, —
Such fitful fire-flies flash athwart the night,
But fade before the shining of that face
Which shines upon you still in Death's despite,
Whose steadfast beauty lights till death your days.

LOVE'S FORGIVENESS.

I DO forgive you for the pain I bear,
Though bitter pain is mingled with my bliss;
For still I think, while thrilling to your kiss,
"He found that other woman much more fair."
I read your words, and see, immortal there,
Another love — how warm it was to this!
And know that from my face you still must miss
The beauty that another used to wear.

Yet I forgive you, Dear, and bow my head
To Destiny, my master and your own, —
He sets the way wherein my feet must tread;
And if he give me nothing quite mine own, —
I know some day my heart, so sore bested,
Will rest most quietly, and turn to stone.

IN TIME TO COME.

THE time will come full soon! I shall be gone,
And you sit silent in the silent place,
With the sad autumn sunlight on your face.
Remembering the loves that were your own,
Haunted perchance by some familiar tone,
You will be weary then for the dead days,
And mindful of their sweet and bitter ways,
Though passion into memory shall have grown.

Then will I with your other ghosts draw nigh,
And whisper, as I pass, some former word, —
Some old endearment known in days gone by,
Some tenderness that once your pulses stirred: —
Which was it spoke to you, the wind or I?
I think you, musing, scarcely will have heard.

A SUMMER'S GROWTH.

FAIR was the flower which proffers now its fruit;
The bud began to swell 'neath Spring's soft dew,
And tenderly the winds of summer blew
To foster it; and great strong suns were mute,
As through its veins warm life began to shoot,
And it put on each day some beauty new.
And all the fairer, as I think, it grew,
Because the streams were tears about its root.

But now our fruit hangs well within our reach,
And this indeed is time for gathering.
It hath the bloom of summer-tinted peach,
Each charm it hath that any man could sing;
Yet we, who taste it, whisper each to each,
"Not sweet, but very bitter, is this thing!"

MY BIRTHDAY.

CHIDE not because I doubt who would believe!
Has not my life been like that April day
Whose dawn awoke us with such proud display
Of mocking glory, kindled to deceive,
While in the distance low winds seemed to grieve, —
Winds sad with prophecy, — then skies grew gray,
And all the morning splendor passed away,
And dark with rain came on the gusty eve?

That was my birthday, symbol of my birth, —
Capricious April's heir, the sport of Fate,
Doomed to be better friends with Grief than Mirth,
To know no love that did not come too late, —
My only hope, sore spent with life's long pain,
In some glad morning to be born again.

IN THE GARDEN OF DREAMS.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.

TENNYSON.

IN THE GARDEN OF DREAMS.

From a brier-grown garden that nobody knows,
Save one lone bird with a vagrant tune,
The dreamer gathers a last sad rose, —
The ghost of a season that once was June.

Pale are the blossoms that cluster here,
And lonesome the song of the mateless bird;
Yet linger and listen, O sweet and dear, —
You shall catch of my soul the secret word.

To the Memory

OF

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

AND

CICELEY NARNEY MARSTON.

I hang this ivy at your postern door.

FRANCIS QUARLES

Lyrics.

'T is my delight alone in summer shade
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

WORDSWORTH.

COME BACK, DEAR DAYS.

COME back, dear days, from out the past!
. . . I see your gentle ghosts arise;
You look at me with mournful eyes,
And then the night grows vague and vast:
You have gone back to Paradise.

Why did you fleet away, dear days?
You were so welcome when you came!
The morning skies were all aflame;
The birds sang matins in your praise;
All else of life you put to shame.

Did I not honor you aright, —
I, who but lived to see you shine,
Who felt your very pain divine,
Thanked God and warmed me in your light,
Or quaffed your tears as they were wine?

What wooed you to those stranger skies, —
What love more fond, what dream more fair,
What music whispered in the air?
What soft delight of smiles and sighs
Enchanted you from otherwhere?

You left no pledges when you went:
The years since then are bleak and cold;
No bursting buds the Junes unfold.
While you were here my all I spent;
Now I am poor and sad and old.

LOVE'S RESURRECTION DAY.

ROUND among the quiet graves,
When the sun was low,
Love went grieving, — Love who saves:
Did the sleepers know?

At his touch the flowers awoke,
At his tender call
Birds into sweet singing broke,
And it did befall

From the blooming, bursting sod
All Love's dead arose,
And went flying up to God
By a way Love knows.

THE STRENGTH OF THE HILLS.

FOR L. I. G.

MY thoughts go home to that old brown house
With its low roof sloping down to the east,
And its garden fragrant with roses and thyme
That blossom no longer except in rhyme,
Where the honey-bees used to feast.

Afar in the west the great hills rose,
Silent and steadfast and gloomy and gray:
I thought they were giants, and doomed to keep
Their watch while the world should wake or sleep,
Till the trumpet should sound on the judgment day.

I used to wonder of what they dreamed
As they brooded there in their silent might,
While March winds smote them, or June rains fell,
Or snows of winter their ghostly spell
Wrought in the long and lonesome night.

They remembered a younger world than ours,
Before the trees on their top were born,
When the old brown house was itself a tree,
And waste were the fields where now you see
The winds astir in the tasselled corn.

And I was as young as the hills were old,
  And the world was warm with the breath of spring,
And the roses red and the lilies white
Budded and bloomed for my heart's delight,
  And the birds in my heart began to sing.

But calm in the distance the great hills rose,
  Deaf unto rapture and dumb unto pain,
Since they knew that Joy is the mother of Grief,
And remembered a butterfly's life is brief,
  And the sun sets only to rise again.

They will brood and dream and be silent as now,
  When the youngest children alive to-day
Have grown to be women and men, — grown old,
And gone from the world like a tale that is told,
  And even whose echo forgets to stay.

"IF THERE WERE DREAMS TO SELL."

If there were dreams to sell,
What would you buy?

BEDDOES.

IF there were dreams to sell,
Do I not know full well
What I would buy?
Hope's dear delusive spell
Its happy tale to tell,
Joy's fleeting sigh.

I would be young again:
Youth's madding bliss and bane
I would recapture;
Though it were keen with pain,
All else seems void and vain
To that fine rapture.

I would be glad once more,
Slip through an open door
Into Life's glory;
Keep what I spent of yore,
Find what I lost before,
Hear an old story.

As it one day befell,
Breaking Death's frozen spell,
Love should draw nigh:
If there were dreams to sell,
Do I not know too well
What I would buy?

IN THE RANKS.

HIS death-blow struck him there in the ranks, —
There in the ranks, with his face to the foe:
Did his dying lips utter curses or thanks?
No one will know.

Still he marched on, he with the rest, —
Still he marched on, with his face to the foe,
To the day's bitter business sternly addressed:
Dead — did they know?

When the day was over, the fierce fight done,
His cheeks were red with the sunset's glow;
And they crowned him there with their laurels won:
Dead — did he know?

Laurels or roses, all one to him now:
What to a dead man is glory or glow?
Rose wreaths for love, or a crown on his brow:
Dead — does he know?

And yet you will see him march on with the rest, —
No man of them all makes a goodlier show, —
In the thick of the tumult jostled and pressed:
Dead — would you know?

EROS.

FILL the swift days full, my dear,
Since life is fleet;
Love, and hold Love fast, my dear,
He is so sweet —
Sweetest, dearest, fleetest comer,
Fledgling of the sudden summer.

Love, but not too well, my dear!
When skies are gray,
And the autumn winds are here,
Love will away —
Fleetest, vaguest, farthest rover
When the summer's warmth is over.

LAUS VENERIS:

A PICTURE BY BURNE JONES.

PALLID with too much longing,
White with passion and prayer,
Goddess of love and beauty,
She sits in the picture there, —

Sits with her dark eyes seeking
Something more subtle still
Than the old delights of loving
Her measureless days to fill.

She has loved and been loved so often
In her long, immortal years,
That she tires of the worn-out rapture,
Sickens of hopes and fears.

No joys or sorrows move her,
Done with her ancient pride;
For her head she found too heavy
The crown she has cast aside.

Clothed in her scarlet splendor,
  Bright with her glory of hair,
Sad that she is not mortal,—
  Eternally sad and fair,

Longing for joys she knows not,
  Athirst with a vain desire,
There she sits in the picture,
  Daughter of foam and fire.

PARLEYING.

I HOLD a shadow's cold, soft hand,
I look in eyes you cannot see,
And words you cannot understand
Come back, as from a distant land, —
The far-off land of Memory.

Forgive me that I sit apart
And hold the shadow's hand in mine,
The past broods darkly in my heart,
And bitter are the tears that start;
I would not mix them with the wine.

The hour will pass: the shade will go
To his dark home, and swift forget,
At rest the daisied turf below,
The sun-warmed hours we used to know,
And the old paths wherein we met.

I am alive! Why should the dead
With cold hand hold the quick in thrall?
To his far place the shade has sped,
Now Life with Life may gayly wed!
. . . My heart misgives me, after all.

IN BOHEMIA.

I CAME between the glad green hills,
Whereon the summer sunshine lay,
And all the world was young that day,
As when the Spring's soft laughter thrills
The pulses of the waking May —
You were alive — yet scarce I knew
The world was glad because of you.

I came between the sad green hills,
Whereon the summer twilight lay,
And all the world was old that day,
And hoary age forgets the thrills
That woke the pulses of the May —
And you were dead — too well I knew
The world was sad because of you.

TO NIGHT.

BEND low, O dusky Night,
And give my spirit rest;
Hold me to your deep breast,
And put old cares to flight;
Give back the lost delight
That once my soul possessed,
When Love was loveliest, —
Bend low, O dusky Night!

Enfold me in your arms, —
The sole embrace I crave
Until the embracing grave
Shield me from life's alarms.
I dare your subtlest charms;
Your deepest spell I brave, —
O, strong to slay or save,
Enfold me in your arms!

WHEN DAY WAS DONE.

FOR L. W.

THE clouds that watched in the west have fled;
The sun has set and the moon is high;
And nothing is left of the day that is dead
Save a fair white ghost in the eastern sky.

While the day was dying we knelt and yearned,
And hoped and prayed till its last breath died;
But since to a radiant ghost it has turned,
Shall we rest with that white grace satisfied?

The fair ghost smiles with a pale, cold smile,
As mocking as life and as hopeless as death —
Shall passionless beauty like this beguile?
Who loves a ghost without feeling or breath?

I remember a maiden as fair to see,
Who once was alive, with a heart like June;
She died, but her spirit wanders free,
And charms men's souls to the old mad tune.

Warm she was, in her life's glad day, —
Warm and fair, and faithful and sweet;
A man might have thrown a kingdom away
To kneel and love at her girlish feet.

But the night came down, and her day was done;
Hoping and dreaming were over for aye;
And then her career as a ghost was begun —
Cold she shone, like the moon on high.

For maiden or moon shall a live man yearn?
Shall a breathing man love a ghost without breath?
Shine, moon, and chill us, you cannot burn;
Go home, Girl-Ghost, to your kingdom of death.

MAUD'S ROSES.

ALONE all day in my cabin,
With never a mortal to see,
I look at Maud's delicate roses,
And the roses look at me.

Like her they are fair and stately;
Like her they are proud and sweet;
And their hue seems made of her blushes,
Where the roses and lilies meet.

And what is their subtle fragrance
But the love that she bade them tell,
Or the breath she breathed through their petals
When she lingered to say farewell?

Ah! roses that stayed when she vanished,
Ah! roses that smile, though she went,
How you mock at the sadness of parting,
With your passionless, perfect content!

"THEIR CANDLES ARE ALL OUT."

FOR L. C. B.

WHAT hap dismays the dead? Their couch is low;
And over it the summer grasses creep,
Or winter snows enshroud it, white and deep,
Or long-prevailing winds of autumn blow.

They hear no rumor of our joy or woe:
The ways we tread are perilous and steep;
They climb no longer, free at last to sleep,
Our weariful, vexed life no more to know.

Do they forget their loves of long ago,
And the glad hopes that made their glad hearts leap?
Or the spent joys for which they used to weep,
When Love and Sorrow buffeted them so?

On us, by winds of Fate swept to and fro,
Do they have pity, whom no rude winds sweep?
How can I tell? Their mystery they keep,
Beneath the blossoms as beneath the snow.

And yet, I think, from that deep rest below,
They would be glad to rise and love and weep;
Once more the thankless harvest field to reap
Of human joy and pain, — life's whole to know.

TO MISTRESS ROSE.

A ROSE by any other name?
Nay, that could hardly be.
No other name, my Flower of June,
Could be the name for thee.

Dear darling of the summer-time
And love-child of the sun,
Whether by thy sweet breath beguiled
Or by thy thorns undone,

I know thee for the Queen of Flowers,
And toast thee by thy name, —
"Here 's to the sweet young loveliness
That sets our hearts aflame!"

AT MIDNIGHT.

THE room is cold and dark to-night:
The fire is low, —
Why come you, you who love the light,
To mock me so?

I pray you leave me now alone;
You worked your will,
And turned my heart to frozen stone, —
Why haunt me still?

I got me to this empty place;
I shut the door, —
Yet through the dark I see your face
Just as of yore.

The old smile curves your lips to-night;
Your deep eyes glow
With that old gleam that made them bright
So long ago.

I listen: do I hear your tone
The silence thrill?
Why come you? I would be alone;
Why vex me still?

What! Would you that we re-embrace, —
We two once more?
Are these your tears that wet my face
Just as before?

You left to seek some new delight,
Yet your tears flow;
What sorrow brings you back to-night?
Shall I not know?

I will not let you grieve alone, —
The night is chill, —
Though love is dead and hope has flown,
Pity lives still.

. . . . .

How silent is the empty space!
Dreamed I once more?
Henceforth against your haunting face
I bar the door.

IN A BOWER.

A MAIDEN sits in her bower and sings,
And your heart keeps time to the tune ;
In the garden walks the red rose springs, —
The month is June.

The month is June, and full are the days, —
Fair days, of the summer fed ;
And softly the singer sings her lays :
Her lips are red.

A face she has that is pale as Sleep,
And hair like the midnight skies
When the wings of tempest across them sweep,
And strange dark eyes.

The song she sings is a siren's song,
A tempting, dangerous rune, —
If you hark at all you will hear too long
That fatal tune.

ROSES.

ROSES that briefly live,
Joy is your dower;
Blest be the Fates that give
One perfect hour.
And, though too soon you die,
In your dust glows
Something the passer-by
Knows was a Rose.

THE GHOST'S RETURN.

BACK through the rain and mist
Of my far way,
I have come, whom you kissed
That other day.

See, love, I wait outside
While the rains fall:
Through the night, void and wide,
Hark to my call.

Do you falter, you who loved
So long and well,
Now I my love have proved,
Breaking Death's spell?

Leaving those pale delights
Dead folk that thrill,
Through their dim days and nights,
Wait I your will.

Dear love, unbar the door,
Life is so sweet!
Warmed on your heart once more,
My heart shall beat.

Snatch me from very Death:
Heaven will forgive.
Breathe in my lips your breath:
Then I shall live.

Nay, but you shrink with fear,
No welcome speak, —
Now shall the grave be dear,
Love is so weak.

AS I SAIL.

FAR on the gray sea glooms and glowers,
Far off the salt winds vaguely stray,
And through the long monotonous hours
My thoughts go wandering on their way;

Go back to find that earlier time
When, lingering by a bluer sea,
A poet wooed me with his rhyme,
And all the world was changed for me.

The winds to music strange were set,
The sunsets glowed with sudden flame,
And all the shining sands were wet
With waves that whispered as they came,

And told a tender low-breathed tale
Of love that always should be young;
Dear love that should not change or fail, —
Such love as love-lorn bards have sung.

Pale roses bloomed by that far sea,
And shivered at the sea-wind's breath;
A bird flew low, and sang to me —
"The end of love and life is death."

I left the pale rose where it grew;
I would not heed the warning bird;
Of all the world I, only, knew
How sweet the music I had heard, —

How dear the love, how true the truth
My poet uttered in his rhyme;
And how it gave me back my youth
In that deep-hearted summer-time.

Then winter came; the pale rose died,
And to the south the wise bird flew;
And I — ah me, the world is wide,
And poets love while love is new.

A GIRL'S FUNERAL IN MILAN.

THERE in the strange old gilded hearse
With a mound of paper-flowers on her breast,
Her life being over, for better or worse,
They bore her on to her final rest.

And the women followed her, two by two,
And talked of how young she was to die;
And the cold drops drenched them through and through,
As under the pitiless, frowning sky

On they marched in the drizzling rain
To the little old church in the Milan square,
Where the choir-boys chanted with shrill refrain,
And the toothless Padre muttered his prayer;

Then straight to the waiting grave they went;
And the rain rained on, and the wind was still;
Since, all her treasure of life being spent,
It was time Death had of the girl his will.

And they left her there with the rain and the wind,
Glad, I think, to have come to the end;
For the grave folds close, and the sod is kind,
And thus do the friendless find a friend.

IN A GARDEN.

PALE in the pallid moonlight,
White as the rose on her breast,
She stood in the fair Rose-garden
With her shy young love confessed.

The roses climbed to kiss her,
The violets, purple and sweet,
Breathed their despair in the fragrance
That bathed her beautiful feet.

She stood there, stately and slender,
Gold hair on her shoulders shed,
Clothed all in white, like the visions
When the living behold the dead.

There, with her lover beside her,
With life and with love she thrilled —
What mattered the world's wide sorrow
To her with her joy fulfilled?

Next year, in the fair Rose-garden,
He waited, alone and dumb,
If perchance from the silent country
The soul of the dead would come,

To comfort the living and loving
With the ghost of a lost delight,
And thrill into quivering welcome
The desolate, brooding night:

Till softly a wind from the distance
Began to blow and blow;
The moon bent nearer and nearer,
And, solemn and sweet and slow,

Came a wonderful rapture of music
That turned to her voice, at last:
Then a cold, soft touch on his forehead,
Like the breath of the wind that passed,—

Like the breath of the wind she touched him;
Thin was her voice and cold;
And something that seemed like a shadow
Slipped through his feverish hold:

But the voice had said, "I love you,
With my first love and my last"—
Then again that wonderful music,
And he knew that her soul had passed.

AT END.

AT end of Love, at end of Life,
At end of Hope, at end of Strife,
At end of all we cling to so —
The sun is setting — must we go?

At dawn of Love, at dawn of Life,
At dawn of Peace that follows Strife,
At dawn of all we long for so —
The sun is rising — let us go!

THE COQUETTE'S DEFENCE.

RED, red roses glowing in the garden,
Rare, white lilies swaying on your stalks,
Did you hear me pray my sweet love for pardon,
Straying with him through your garden walks?

Ah, you glow and smile when the sun shines upon you —
You thrill with delight at the tears of the dew,
And the wind that caresses you boasts that he won you —
Do you think, fair flowers, to them all to be true?

Sun, dew, and wind, ah, they all are your lovers —
Sun, dew, and wind, and you love them back again —
And you flirt with the idle, white moth that hovers
Above your sweet beauty, and laugh at his pain.

Must I, then, be deaf to the wooers that love me,
And because I can hear should my sweet Love complain?
Does he not, in forgiving me, stand high above me,
And punish my fault with his gentle disdain?

You trifle, fair flowers, with the many, but one lord
Wooes you, and wins you, and conquers the throng:
Dews and winds cool you, for warmth you turn sunward, —
You know and I know to whom we belong.

DO NOT GRIEVE.

I WOULD not have you mourn too much,
When I am lying low, —
Your grief would grieve me even then,
Should your tears flow.

But only plant above my grave
One little sprig of rue ;
Then find yourself a fairer love,
But not more true.

The summer winds will come and go
Above me as I lie ;
And if I think at all, my dear,
As they pass by,

I shall remember the old love,
With all its bliss and bane, —
Though Life nor Death can bring me back
The old, sweet pain.

OLD JONES IS DEAD.

I SAT in my window, high overhead,
And heard them say, below in the street,
"I suppose you know that old Jones is dead?"
Then the speakers passed, and I heard their feet
Heedlessly walking their onward way, —
"Dead!" what more could there be to say?

But I sat and pondered what it might mean
Thus to be dead while the world went by:
Did Jones see farther than we have seen?
Was he one with the stars in the watching sky?
Or down there under the growing grass
Did he hear the feet of the daylight pass?

Were daytime and night-time as one to him now,
And grieving and hoping a tale that is told?
A kiss on his lips, or a hand on his brow,
Could he feel them under the church-yard mould,
As he surely had felt them his whole life long,
Though they passed with his youth-time, hot and strong?

They called him "Old Jones" when at last he died;
"Old Jones" he had been for many a year;
Yet his faithful memory Time defied,
And dwelt in the days so distant and dear,
When first he had found that love was sweet
And recked not the speed of its hurrying feet.

Does he brood, in the long night under the sod,
On the joys and sorrows he used to know;
Or far in some wonderful world of God,
Where the shining seraphs stand, row on row,
Does he wake like a child at the daylight's gleam,
And know that the past was a night's short dream?

Is he dead, and a clod there, down below;
Or dead and wiser than any alive;
Which? Ah, who of us all may know,
Or who can say how the dead folk thrive?—
But the summer morning is cool and sweet,
And I hear the live folk laugh in the street.

GRANDMAMMA'S WARNING.

"LOVE is a fire," she said. "Love is a fire,
Beware the madness of that wild desire!
I know, for I was young, and now am old"....
"Oh, did you learn by what your elders told?"

MAID MARION.

LITTLE Maid Marion, Rose in June,
What breath of prophecy comes and goes,
And stirs your heart like a vagrant tune
Till the deepening bloom on your soft cheek glows,

And your blue eyes shine like the morning sky
Just alight with the morning star —
Hopeful and happy and sweet and shy,
While day and its glare are yet afar?

Have you heard a name that we do not hear
And set it to music all your own?
Has there come to you in a vision, Dear,
A face that only your eyes have known?

Or is it still but a wandering voice
That whispers you something vague and sweet,
Of days of wooing and days of choice,
And hearts that meet as the waters meet?

Days that will come to you, Rose in June —
Days that will test you and try you and show
The sacredest meaning, the secretest tune,
Of all that your maidenly heart can know.

They will leave you not as they find you, Dear —
The morning star gives place to the sun ;
But your blue eyes meet me, faithful and clear,
I can trust your soul, when the dream is done.

A LITTLE COMEDY.

IS the world the same, do you think, my dear,
As when we walked by the sea together,
And the white caps danced and the cliffs rose sheer,
And we were glad in the autumn weather?

You played at loving that day, my dear, —
How well you told me your tender story, —
And I made answer, with smile and tear,
While the sky was flushed with the sunset's glory.

Now I shut my eyes, and I see, my dear,
That far-off path by the surging ocean, —
I shut my eyes, and I seem to hear
Your voice surmounting the tide's commotion.

It was but a comedy slight, my dear, —
Why should its memory come to vex me?
Can it be I am longing that you should appear
And play it again? My thoughts perplex me.

'T is the sea and the shore that I miss, my dear, —
The sea and the shore, and the sunset's glory:
Or would these be nothing without you near,
To murmur again that fond, old story?

I know you now but too well, my dear, —
With your heart as light as a wind-blown feather, —
Yet somehow the world seems cold and drear
Without your acting, this autumn weather.

IN AUTUMN.

WITH the leaves around her dying,
And the wind around her sighing,
And her listless hands together,
She sits in the autumn weather.

The sad little streams are grieving,
The poor little birds are leaving,
And the flowers and she together
Fade in the autumn weather.

AT FIVE O'CLOCK.

TO K. F. POURING TEA.

FAIR Lady Rose, round whom black-coated bees
Make murmurous humming all the afternoon, —
Thou dost belong to the soft, summer ease
Of purple islands, where the southern seas
Break on the shore with soft beguiling rune.

Lands fair as the far-famed Hesperides
Should be thy home, O Lady of the June!
And thou shouldst pour, instead of cups like these,
Some magic draught, which to the subtle lees
Thy slaves should quaff, and praise thee all in tune

To playing of such melodies as please
Fair ladies' ears, and win for Love love's boon:
And sweet, beneath the gently-drooping trees,
Should be the tender whisper of the breeze,
And time should pause for thee at golden noon.

BESIDE A BIER.

I HAD never kissed her her whole life long, —
Now I stand by her bier does she feel
How, with love that the waiting years made strong,
I set on her lips my seal?

Will she wear my kiss in the grave's long night,
And wake sometimes with a thrill
From dreams of the old life's missed delight,
To feel that the grave is chill?

"It was warm," will she say, "in that world above;
It was warm, but I did not know
How he loved me there, with his whole life's love —
It is cold, down here below."

RED AND WHITE ROSES.

ROSES the lover gives to his love;
Roses we lay on the breast of death
That nevermore fondest whisper can move, —
Which is the sweeter, answer and prove,
Passionate love, or sleep without breath?

For love you burn with a crimson fire,
For death you are pale as the winter's snow:
Warm for the one, with the heart's desire,
Cold for the other, since hopes expire, —
Which is the sweeter? When shall we know?

MY SAINT.

OH long the weary vigils since you left me,—
In your far home, I wonder, can you know
To what dread uttermost your loss bereft me,
Or half it meant to me that you should go?

This world is full, indeed, of fair hopes perished,
And loves more fleet than this poor fleeting breath;
But that deep heart in which my heart was cherished
Must surely have survived what we call Death.

They cannot cease — our own true dead — to love us,
And you will hear this far-off cry of mine,
Though you keep holiday so high above us,
Where all the happy spirits sing and shine.

Steal back to me to-night, from your far dwelling,
Beyond the pilgrim moon, beyond the sun:
They will not miss your single voice for swelling
Their rapture-chorus — you are only one.

Ravish my soul, as with divine embraces;
Teach me, if Life is false, that Death is true;
With pledge of new delights in heavenly places
Entice my spirit, — take me hence with you!

WARNING.

FLY away, O white-winged moth!
Wherefore burn your tender wings?
Fatal is the flame you love
To such gauzy things.

That too ardent crimson ray
Only steel may safely prove:
Use your wings to fly away —
You're too slight for love.

THE ROSE SHE WORE IN WINTER.

TO R. H.

O ROSE, so subtly sweet!
What dost thou in the snow —
The time of frost and sleet,
When roses should not blow —
Playing at summer so?

When we that beauty meet,
Which nightingales in June
For love and bliss entreat,
With what cold, wintry rune
Shall we thy praise entune?

My Rose, so subtly sweet,
Thy rose-red lips I kiss;
I kneel at thy dear feet,
Dear Rose, and do not miss
The summer's by-gone bliss.

SHALL I NOT KNOW?

WHEN over me the heedless wild things grow,
Will any mourn for me a little space,
Or grieve that in that grave so cool and low
I find my resting-place?

The strong world will go on though I am still,
The morning sun mock darkness with his pride,
The sunset splendors clothe the western hill,
As though I had not died.

The spring flowers will awake in field and hedge,
And summer roses answer to the sun;
The lone, last bird wail in the icy sedge
For winter's reign begun;

And loves, like summer blossoms, burst to bloom
And sweeten with their fragrance all the air,
And hates grow strong, like weeds about a tomb,
While I am silent there.

No fleeting joys shall mock me where I lie;
No hate so keen that it can pierce that rest:
I shall not hear Life's footsteps passing by,
Or know that Death is best.

Yet, shouldst thou come, when all the stars are bright
And all the sky by their cold light possest,
And hark to hear, through voices of the night,
Her voice who loved thee best,

Perchance, though I were frozen in the grave,
My heart might quicken when it heard thy call,
And even then strong Love be strong to save —
Love who is lord of all:

Or if, sealed fast by Death, even to that cry
My ears were deaf and my closed lips were dumb,
My soul, heedless of others passing by,
Might know that Thou hadst come.

For me the busy world will not stand still,
Nor in one heart the summer cease to glow;
And Love and Life on earth shall have their will:
But, come! shall I not know?

FOR A BIRTHDAY.

M. B. A.

THRICE happy day, that saw our Fair Maid's eyes
First open to the sunshine! Art thou come
To see if yet the light of Paradise
Has faded from them, in her earthly home?

Nay, there it shines! As innocent and true
As that first day, she dwells among us yet;
Look in those eyes of Heaven's serenest blue,
And see the Heaven she never can forget.

A MOOD OF LOVE.

DO I love thee? Who can tell?
Time was when I loved thee well:
Is this love that now I bear,
Or does Use Love's semblance wear?

Should I grieve if thou wert gone?
Should I miss thee, left alone?
Would the summer be less sweet
If our lips should never meet?

If some other fairer Fair
Fettered thee with silken snare,
Should I sorrow to behold
Thee her captive — mine of old?

Ah, it may be, should we part,
I should learn how dear thou art, —
When the gods withdraw we know
How divine the feet that go.

NAY.

TO A. W. K.

SHALL we grow old together?
Nay! though 't is wintry weather
The earth awaits the spring,
When suns shall warm the heather,
When birds will moult and feather,
And happy things take wing:
And thou and I together,
Defying wintry weather,
We, too, will wait our spring.

THE ROSES OF LA GARRAYE.

AMONG the ruins of La Garraye
Grow wonderful roses, as pale as death, —
Roses that never a fervid breath
Of the Breton summer glad and gay
Can warm with a single crimson ray.

Mid ruins and roses two lovers sighed,
And talked of the old time far away
When the roses were red at La Garraye,
When the gay young lord and his fair young bride
Rode forth on their swift steeds, side by side,

And met the sudden and terrible blight —
Like the lightning flash from a summer cloud
Followed by thunder long and loud —
That turned, in an instant, their noon to night,
And slew, not Love, but Love's delight.

And they pitied those lovers of long ago —
These modern lovers that told the tale —
And honored the love that could not fail:
And she said, — "My dear, do you love *me* so?"
And he, — "Do you love *me*, and do not know?"

Then he gathered those blossoms of ruin and blight,
And — "I give you the roses of Love," said he:
"No, you give me the roses of Death," said she,
"The roses that spring from sorrow and night,
For love and for living too coldly white."

She shuddered a little, yet pinned them fast —
The pallid roses of Fate were they,
And died at the close of a brief bright day,
Like a brief bright love that came and passed,
Leaving only its ghost at last.

NOW AND THEN.

AND had you loved me then, my dear,
And had you loved me there,
When still the sun was in the east
And hope was in the air, —
When all the birds sang to the dawn
And I but sang to you, —
Oh, had you loved me then, my dear,
And had you then been true!

But ah! the day wore on, my dear,
And when the noon grew hot
The drowsy birds forgot to sing,
And you and I forgot
To talk of love, or live for faith,
Or build ourselves a nest;
And now our hearts are shelterless,
Our sun is in the west.

"THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING."

DO you see how the Old Year hides his eyes,
Hides his eyes as he steals away?
Yet they shone like stars with a glad surprise
Only a twelvemonth ago to-day.
He had come to be king o'er the world of men;
Gifts he had brought in his lavish hand,
And we, his subjects, trusted him then,
And shouted and laughed at the king's command.

The bells they rang, and the people cheered,
And the preachers praised him and welcomed him in —
Never a king more royal appeared,
Or ever was hailed with a lordlier din.
Then, sooth, he began his gifts to bestow,
As a monarch might on a waiting band
Of his courtiers, smiling and bowing below,
Waiting his pleasure and kissing his hand.

He was a giver impartial as Fate, —
Donor to one and donor to all, —
And the crowds that gathered his pleasure to wait
Caught each of them something his hand let fall:

To these it was Love, that is strong as life;
To those it was Death, more tender than love;
To some it was victory after strife,
To others defeat and the sorrow thereof.

Till at last his courtiers grew ill content,
And each man sighed for his neighbor's dole,
And the Year was old, and his strength was spent —
Toll the bell for his parting soul!
Toll, but be glad, for the old should die,
And love and life belong to the new —
Why over the Old Year should we sigh?
He was but a niggard to me — to you.

But this glad New Year, with smiles in his eyes,
This new young king, who is good to see,
He will make us happy and wealthy and wise,
And for him we will clamor joyously —
Shout till our throats with shouting are hoarse,
Ring the bells and kindle the fires,
For he will bring to us joy, perforce —
Give to our hearts our hearts' desires.

Surely he cannot be stern or sad, —
He, with the light in his shining eyes, —
We, his subjects, shall all be glad,
Dowered at last with some sweet surprise:
What the hard Old Year to our prayers denied
We shall win from the New Year, glad and gay,
And live, with his bounty satisfied, —
Welcome him in! It is New Year's Day.

Sonnets in Many Moods.

Scorn not the Sonnet.

WORDSWORTH.

It is the violoncello, or else man's heart's complaint.

WALT WHITMAN.

HELEN'S CUP.

GIVE me the potent draught that Helen poured
To lull Telemachus! Make me forget
All present peril, all old sins, and let
Me dream, in peace. Long threat'ning, Fate's sharp sword
Before my eyes has hung — about me roared
The battle's clamor. Sore I am beset —
New fears and ancient pains together met
Assail me, who for peace have long implored:

Give me at last to drink, and let them flee,
The baffled ghosts that watch me sullenly,
To those waste fields that waiting shadows keep;
And down some waveless tide, in quiet deep
As set of day upon a quiet sea,
Oh, let me drift and dream, and fall on sleep!

SILENT SORROW.

IF she unclosed her lips and made her moan
She would not be so weary with her woe —
A burden shared is lightened: even so
The weight is heavier that we bear alone,
And anguish, pent within, turns hearts to stone.
The fellowship of sorrow to forego —
To suffer and be silent — is to know
The blackest blossom from the black root grown.

And yet great joys and greatest woes are dumb:
Small is the sum that reckoning can compute —
The shallows babble, but the depths are mute —
The great mid-sea our measure may not plumb:
King Love, King Pain, King Death, in silence come;
And, meeting them, we silently salute.

A CRY.

O WANDERER in unknown lands, what cheer?
How dost thou fare on thy mysterious way?
What strange light breaks upon thy distant day,
Yet leaves me lonely in the darkness here?
Oh, bide no longer in that far-off sphere:
Though all Heaven's cohorts should thy footsteps stay,
Break through their splendid, militant array,
And answer to my call, O dead and dear!

I shall not fear thee, howsoe'er thou come;
Thy coldness will not chill, though Death *is* cold;
A touch, and I shall know thee, — or a breath;
Speak the old, well-known language, or be dumb;
Only come back! Be near me as of old;
So thou and I shall triumph over Death!

LOVE'S EMPTY HOUSE.

O THOU long-silent, solitary house,
Where Love once came and went with joyous cries,
Or lingered long, sighing as Summer sighs
When Autumn's breath begins her fear to rouse
With fierce caress that shall make bare her boughs,
Her tender boughs, and all her beauty's prize
Deliver, faded, to the winds that rise
And rend her crown from her dishonored brows!—

O solitary house! thine open door
Again shall welcome sweet Love's wingèd tread;
His eyes shall light thee, as they lit of yore
In days when Love and Joy were newly wed;
He shall return with myrtle round his head,
And fill thy halls with music as before.

AFTER DEATH.

And very sweet it is
To know he still is warm though I am cold.
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

I WOULD not have thee warm when I am cold;
But both together — 'neath some sylvan mound,
Amid the pleasant secrets under ground,
Where green things flourish in the embracing mould,
And jealous seeds the souls of blossoms hold —
In some sweet fellowship of silence bound,
Deeper than life, more exquisite than sound,
Rest tranquilly while Love's new tales are told.

We will not grudge the waking world its bliss,
Its joy of speech, its gladness of surprise,
When lovers clasp each others hands and kiss
And earth puts on new glory to their eyes:
We, lying there with Death's deep knowledge wise,
Shall know that we have found Life's best in this.

VOICES ON THE WIND.

FAR out at sea I hear the wind complain, —
With the old plaint that vexed my childish ear,
And seemed the cry of spirits drawing near
To sob their incommunicable pain.
Whence did they come, and whither go again?
My very heart stood still with sudden fear
When the forlorn approach I used to hear
Of all the shuddering, melancholy train.

And lo, in this night's vigil far at sea,
The same long cry! — Are they unpardoned yet?
Does the old pain still goad them till they come,
Unsheltered souls, to sob once more to me
Of some dead wrong they never can forget
Till there is no more sea, and winds are dumb?

THE CUP OF DEATH.

FOR A PICTURE BY ELIHU VEDDER.

SHE bends her beauteous head to taste thy draught,
O thou stern Angel of the Darker Cup!
With thee to-night in the dim shades to sup,
Where all they be who from that cup have quaffed.
She had been clad with loveliness, and laughed
At Life's strong enemies who lie in wait;
Had kept with golden youth her queenly state,
All unafraid of Sorrow's threat'ning shaft.

Then human Grief found out her human heart,
And she was fain to go where pain is dumb;
So Thou wert welcome, Angel dread to see,
And she fares onward with thee, willingly,
To dwell where no man loves, no lovers part, —
Thus Grief that is, makes welcome Death to come.

TO A MODERN POET.

WITH A COPY OF "SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS."

TAKE thou these words thine elder brother writ, —
Thou, to whom Song is as thy native speech!
Across the swift-flown centuries thou canst reach
To him, thy kinsman, reverent hands and sit —
While shadows of the Past about ye flit —
With him, "in sessions of sweet, silent thought,"
And share with him those halcyon days that brought
Music's sweet charm, and sparkle keen of wit.

So shalt thou learn the secret of his song, —
Those minor chords; since Life is as the leaf,
And gladdest love and brightest day are brief;
Those clear, bold notes that told his soul was strong,
Brave to endure, and swift to smite the wrong,
Until Death healed thine elder brother's grief.

THE LAST GOOD-BY.

HOW shall we know it is the last good-by?
The skies will not be darkened in that hour,
No sudden blight will fall on leaf or flower,
No single bird will hush its careless cry,
And you will hold my hands, and smile or sigh
Just as before. Perchance the sudden tears
In your dear eyes will answer to my fears;
But there will come no voice of prophecy, —

No voice to whisper, "Now, and not again,
Space for last words, last kisses, and last prayer
For all the wild, unmitigated pain
Of those who, parting, clasp hands with despair,
"Who knows?" we say, but doubt and fear remain.
Would any *choose* to part thus unaware?

LOVE IS DEAD.

I HEARD one cry out strongly, "Love is dead!"
And then we went and looked upon his face,
Turned into marble by Death's final grace:
His silent lips, that once so vainly pled,
Smile now, as men smile being newly wed;
Since some strange joy Life's sorrows did efface
When Death's arms clasped him in supreme embrace,
All his long pain of living comforted.

And you would wake him? Dare you him recall
From Death's enamouring to Life's stern pain;
Make him again the old grief's hopeless thrall;
Bind him once more with the old clanking chain,
And goad him on his weary way again? —
Nay! let him rest with Death, the lord of all.

HIC JACET.

SO Love is dead that has been quick so long!
Close, then, his eyes, and bear him to his rest,
With eglantine and myrtle on his breast,
And leave him there, their pleasant scents among;
And chant a sweet and melancholy song
About the charms whereof he was possessed,
And how of all things he was loveliest,
And to compare with aught were him to wrong.

Leave him beneath the still and solemn stars,
That gather and look down from their far place
With their long calm our brief woes to deride,
Until the Sun the Morning's gate unbars
And mocks, in turn, our sorrows with his face; —
And yet, had Love been Love, he had not died.

LEFT BEHIND.

WILT thou forget me in that other sphere, —
Thou who hast shared my life so long in this, —
And straight grown dizzy with that greater bliss,
Fronting heaven's splendor strong and full and clear,
No longer hold the old embraces dear
When some sweet seraph crowns thee with her kiss?
Nay, surely from that rapture thou wouldst miss
Some slight, small thing that thou hast cared for here.

I do not dream that from those ultimate heights
Thou wilt come back to seek me where I bide;
But if I follow, patient of thy slights,
And if I stand there, waiting by thy side,
Surely thy heart with some old thrill will stir,
And turn thy face toward me, even from her.

FUTURE FORGIVENESS.

HOW long wilt thou be silent, lying there?
I grieved thee once, and now my heart makes moan,
Cries, and thou wilt not answer, turned to stone,
And pitiless as stone to my despair:
My tears fall on thee, and thou dost not care:
Oh! art thou cruel now who wast so kind;
Or only to my sorrow deaf and blind —
Gone on beyond the hearing of my prayer?

Shall it not be that in thy brighter life
I find thee, move thee to some pitying thrill,
And win thee by my pleading to forgive?
Thou couldst forget past folly and past strife,
Seeing, in that new sphere, I love thee still;
And thou — didst thou not love thou wouldst not live.

IN PACE.

WHEN I am dead, with mockery of praise
Thou shalt not vex the stillness of my sleep:
Leave me to long tranquillity and deep,
Who, through such weary nights and lonesome days,
Such hopeless stretch of uncompanioned ways,
Have come at length my quiet rest to keep
Where nettles thrive, and careless brambles creep,
And things that love the dark their dull brood raise.

After my restless years I would have rest, —
Long rest after so many restless years, —
Unmocked by hope, set free from haunting fears;
Since some old pain might waken at thy tread,
Do thou for once in this my heart's behest,
Come thou not nigh when I am lying dead.

A WOMAN'S KNOWLEDGE.

A ROSE to smell a moment, then to leave,
Chance strain of song you smile at as you pass,
Bubble that breaks before you lip the glass,
Chain frail as the frail thread that spiders weave;
Oh, do not think that I myself deceive!
Thus, and not otherwise, to you am I, —
A moment's pleasure as you pass me by,
Powerless, at best, to make you joy or grieve.

And you, to me, my sun-god and my sun,
Who warmed my heart to life with careless ray!
Forever will that burning memory stay
And warm me in the grave when life is done: —
What farther grace has any woman won?
Since your chance gift you cannot take away.

IN SOLITUDE.

HAVE pity thou, who all my heart hast known !
Come back from thy far place and heal my pain !
My long, unshared, uncheered days wax and wane ;
The strong suns mock me, I am so alone ;
The hurrying winds sweep by, nor heed my moan ;
The climbing stars of night, a shining train,
With curious eyes behold me wait in vain, —
And Nature's very self doth me disown.

I did not know how blest I was, God wot,
When thy dear voice made music for my ears,
Fostered my starveling joys and shamed my fears :
Now thou art dumb ; and I, by thee forgot,
Live through the empty, pitiless months and years
And think how I was glad, yet knew it not.

BEYOND SIGHT AND SOUND.

FULL soon I shall be gone, where dead men go, —
Gone on, beyond your ken, far out of sight —
To that dim, phantom world that no stars light ;
Where souls like pallid flames flit to and fro,
Where Love is not, nor memory of Woe,
And no voice pleads through that eternal night ;
Dumb are those souls, and dead is their delight,
They need no courage, since no fear they know.

If a sad ghost should seem to bar your way,
Think not from that vague world that I return ;
'T will be but moonlight silvering some spray.
I shall not hear you, howso'er you yearn ;
Yet if your cry *could* follow my far track,
I think from bane or bliss I should come back.

TO ONE WHO HAS LOVED OFTEN.

PALIMPSEST heart, on which so many names
Love's hand has writ! Blind Love, could he not know
Which the true script of Fate, and thus forego
To lend his torch to kindle transient flames?
New risen joy each new day's sun proclaims;
Each dawning sets the amorous east aglow;
Each day is bright until its sun is low;
As of fair days, so is it of fair dames.

Why should we chide the glad who find life sweet?
Their careless hearts are like a favored year,
All blessed summer; or a garden ground
To which no frosts come, where no tempests beat,
But roses bloom forever, red and dear,
And blithe birds fill it always with sweet sound.

BEFORE THE SHRINE.

I BUILT a shrine, and set my idol there,
And morn and noon and night my knees I bent,
And cried aloud until my strength was spent,
Beseeching his cold pity with my prayer.
Sometimes at dawning, when the day was fair,
A ray of light to his stern visage sent
The semblance of a smile. Did he relent,
This strong god, Love, whose high-priest is Despair?

High noon came on, and in its full, clear light
I saw his lips, as ruthless as of old;
And his eyes mocked me like relentless fate,
Till I was fain to hide me from his sight;
Then one swept off from him his mantle's fold,
And lo, my idol was not Love, but Hate.

ROSES AT SEA.

LOVE-CHILDREN of the summer and the sun
Alien to this salt air and stretch of sea,
And beautiful in your bright witchery
As the first rose, whose wooing was begun
By the first nightingale, when day was done
And over Eden's walks the wind blew free,
And the winged wooers sang in ecstasy
Of love and love and love — till love was won.

To-day you bless me with your beauty's spell,
Roses from some dream-garden left behind,
With breath half tenderness and half farewell,
And gracious hopes with your sweet grace entwined:
Will hopes, like buds, turn blossoms? Who shall tell?
Your fragrant soul escapes — can Memory bind?

A GHOST'S QUESTION.

WHEN with your fair, new Love you laughing go
Through the loud streets we two have known so well,
Will not old memories your feet compel
To wait, sometimes, for one whose step is slow,
Whose presence only you may feel or know, —
The shadow of a shadow, you dispel
With wave of hand, as the old tale you tell
To new ears listening as I used, you know?

Or when you press her hand against your breast,
Will you for one swift instant think it mine,
And thrill to the dead joy you once possessed
And quaffed and savored, as men quaff their wine—
Then turn and meet her smile, jest back her jest,
And swear afresh she doth all charms combine?

SISTER SORROW.

I FOUND her walking in a lonely place,
Where shadows lingered and the day was low;
She trod a devious path with footsteps slow,
And by the waning light I scanned her face,
And in its loveliness beheld the trace
Old tears had left, and woes of long ago;
Then knew she I was kin to her, and so
Stretched forth her chill, soft hand with welcoming grace.

Now I walk with her through her realm of shade —
I hear gay music sound, and laughter ring,
And voices call me that I knew of old,
But of their mocking mirth I am afraid, —
Led through the dusk by her to whom I cling,
May I not reach some blessedness untold?

HE LOVED.

"HE loved me once!" What words are these —
"He loved!"
Past tense, past love, past joy, past hope, past dream, —
All things that were and are not, — how they seem
To crowd around and mock the love disproved,
The former bliss, by ages long removed;
The light, far off as farthest star's pale beam
That sheds through trackless space its fitful gleam
Which once, our sun, we welcomed and approved.

How dear that was which lies here stark and dead
While we sit watching in God's awful sight,
He knows; but hath no dew of healing shed,
Nor any grace doth proffer us, — by night
And change and death who are discomfited, —
No single hope to turn our dark to light.

HEREAFTER.

IN after years a twilight ghost shall fill
With shadowy presence all thy waiting room:
From lips of air thou canst not kiss the bloom;
Yet at old kisses will thy pulses thrill,
And the old longing, that thou couldst not kill,
Feeling her presence in the gathering gloom,
Will mock thee with the hopelessness of doom,
While she stands there and smiles, serene and still.

Thou canst not vex her, then, with passion's pain:
Call, and the silence will thy call repeat;
But she will smile there, with cold lips and sweet,
Forgetful of old tortures, and the chain
That once she wore, the tears she wept in vain
At passing from her threshold of thy feet.

AT WAR.

THROUGH the large, stormy splendors of the night,
When clouds made war, and spears of moonlight strove
To penetrate their serried ranks and prove
That braver than the darkness was the light,
Yet failed before the storm-clouds' gathered might,
I heard a voice cry, "Strong indeed is Love,
But stronger Fate and Death, who hold above
Their pitiless, high court, in Love's despite."

Storm-cloud met storm-cloud, reeled, and shook, and fled, —
The old earth trembled at their mighty rage, —
Till, suddenly, a lark sang clear o'erhead,
As if to share his joy he did engage
All earth and heaven; and Night's wild war was done,
And Love and Morning triumphed with the sun.

NEAR, YET FAR.

SO near! and yet, I think, as far apart
As heaven from hell, high noon from darkest night,
Or buried face, from longing lover's sight:
I dream of you, and then from dreams I start
To hear the beating of my own sad heart,
That snatched from dreams impossible delight,
But quickly wakes again, in wretched plight,
To meet the day's keen pain and ceaseless smart.

How shall I comfort, then, my lonesome years —
Since dreams are dim, and sleeping time is brief — ?
For very full I am of restless fears,
Blown to and fro, as is a vagrant leaf;
And well I know how idle are the tears
That burn my aching eyes, yet mock my grief.

A FALLEN HOUSE.

THE end has come, which never seems the end;
And thou and I, who loved so long and well,
Find at the last our Fate implacable, —
Stern Fate, who wills not that our lives shall blend,
And overthrows fair things we did intend.
The house in which long time we thought to dwell,
Was built upon a ruin — so it fell.
Great was the fall, which no man could defend.

Behold it lies there overthrown, that house!
In its fair halls no comer shall carouse;
Its broad rooms with strange silences are filled;
No fire upon its crumbling hearth shall glow —
Seeing its desolation, men shall know
On ruin of what was they may not build.

MY MOURNER.

I LIE here very still; and he draws nigh
To stand beside me, and to look his last
On her who far beyond his ken has passed,
Yet rests here, 'neath his touch, so tranquilly;
From the shut lips there comes no least, low sigh;
No eyelash quivers, and white Death holds fast,
In long embrace by longing dreams forecast,
The life that had known Life's satiety.

I laughed and loved and wept, and now I sleep;
And that were best of all, if no dreams come
To mar this quietude of slumber, deep
And still as some deep night when winds are dumb;
But he, my mourner, wherefore should he keep
Intrusive vigil round my silent home?

AT SEA.

OUTSIDE the mad sea ravens for its prey,
Shut from it by a floating plank I lie;
Through this round window search the faithless sky,
The hungry waves that fain would rend and slay,
The live-long, blank, interminable way,
Blind with the sun and hoarse with the wind's cry
Of wild, unconquerable mutiny,
Until night comes more terrible than day.

No more at rest am I than wind and wave;
My soul cries with them in their wild despair,
I, who am Destiny's impatient slave,
Who find no help in hope, nor ease in prayer,
And only dream of rest, on some dim shore
Where sea and storm and life shall be no more.

LAURA SLEEPING.

COME hither and behold this lady's face,
Who lies asleep, as if strong Death had kissed
Upon her eyes the kiss none can resist,
And held her fast in his prolonged embrace!
See the still lips, which grant no answering grace
To Love's fond prayers, and the sweet, carven smile,
Sign of some dream-born joy which did beguile
The dreaming soul from its fair resting-place!

So will she look when Death indeed has sway
O'er her dear loveliness, and holds her fast
In that last sleep which knows nor night, nor day,
Which hopes no future, contemplates no past;
So *will* she look; but now, behold! she wakes —
Thus, from the Night, Dawn's sunlit beauty breaks.

TO ONE MOST UNHAPPY.

IF I should see thee, Most Unhappy, dead,
How should I dare to utter moan for thee?
Does any grieve for prisoner set free?
Or shall our tears upon his brow be shed
Who after long starvation full is fed?
Nay, rather, clamor, bells, exultantly;
Like wedding chimes ring out your harmony;
Since saddest Life to gladdest Death is wed.

Thou, whose whole life was sorrow! In thy grave
Shall not strange joy possess thee, and deep rest;
Such rest as no man knoweth, having breath?
Wilt thou not hear from far the old blasts rave
That long pursued thee with relentless quest,
And know them mocked, at last, by thee and Death?

IN THE COURT OF THE LIONS:

BY MOONLIGHT.

THESE lions were sculptured centuries ago
In that fair court a Sultan made for her
Who was his heart's delight. Her worshipper
Was he whom all men worshipped; proving so
His love and homage that the ages know
How fair she was, and how at softest stir
Of her soft robes — as these proud courts aver —
His kingly heart with kingly love did glow;

Till he bade crafty workmen come and make
A palace, lovely for her lovely sake,
Thick-set with gems, with many a sculptured space
Wrought cunningly out of the creamy stone
To frame the dusky beauty of her face, —
Still on those courts the white moon shines, but *they*
are gone!

ALHAMBRA, SPAIN, 1883.

MY CASTLE.

A SPANISH Castle long ago I built,
Where Love and I might keep our holiday;
In its fair court the fountain's sparkling play
Plashed light and music, and the happy lilt
Of singing birds with yellow sunshine gilt
Called — mate to mate — in amorous roundelay;
And there, I thought, sweet Love might live alway,
And my libation to the gods I spilt.

Fair 'gainst the western sky my Castle rose;
Men envied me who saw its turrets shine
Agleam with sunset lights of burning gold;
And Love was lord, and well to rule Love knows,
And I was his, and he was all divine —
But I forgot that Love, himself, grows old.

BY MARCH WIND LED.

THE wild, beleaguering March wind storms my door,
And in his wake surges an army vast, —
Old Hopes, old Dreams, old Love, too dear to last,
And all that made life glad in days of yore,
Turned now to ghosts, and from their alien shore
Come back for this one night to bring my Past,
And vex me with its spell about me cast,
Though It and I be parted evermore.

Beleaguering host! I bid ye now avaunt!
I will not listen, though ye call for aye.
As pitiless as blasts from this March sky
I found ye once. What right have ye to haunt
This night that should be peaceful? I defy
Your evil power — my soul ye shall not daunt.

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.

HOW shall I here her placid picture paint
With touch that shall be delicate, yet sure?
Soft hair above a brow so high and pure
Years have not soiled it with an earthly taint,
Needing no aureole to prove her saint;
Firm mind that no temptation could allure;
Soul strong to do, heart stronger to endure;
And calm, sweet lips, that utter no complaint.

So have I seen her, in my darkest days
And when her own most sacred ties were riven,
Walk tranquilly in self-denying ways,
Asking for strength, and sure it would be given;
Filling her life with lowly prayer, high praise, —
So shall I see her, if we meet in heaven.

AT A RUINED ABBEY.

THE gray day's ending followed the gray day, —
All gray together, ruin and air and sky, —
And a lone wind of memory whispered by,
And told dark secrets on its wandering way;
Through the blank windows' space, like ghosts astray,
Sad crowds of black-winged jackdaws came and went —
Were they dead monks on some strange penance sent,
Who used within these walls to preach and pray?

Do they return, from the far, starry sphere,
To their old haunt within these ruins old,
To celebrate, perchance, some mystic rite,
Some yearning soul's outcry of pain to hear;
And, when the awful story has been told,
Will priest and sinner vanish on the night?

His Second Wife Speaks.

If two lives join there is oft a scar,
They are one and one with a shadowy third.

BROWNING.

I.

A PARABLE.

I LONGED for rest, and some one spoke me fair,
And proffered goodly rooms wherein to dwell,
Hung round with tapestries, and garnished well,
That I might take mine ease and pleasure there;
And there I sought a refuge from despair,
A joy that should my life's long gloom dispel;
But ominously through those halls there fell
Strange sounds, as of old music in the air.

As day went down, the music grew apace,
And in the moonlight saw I, white and cold,
A presence radiant in the radiant space,
With smiling lips that never had grown old;
And then I knew the secret none had told,
And shivered there, an alien in that place.

II.

SILENT.

I WILL not speak. For ever from old days
Another voice assails him; shall mine come
To break that perfect music? Make me dumb,
God, who art merciful! and of thy grace
Keep my lips silent. I have heard him praise
Her speech, as sweet as late bird singing home,
And soft as on far shore breaks the pale foam,
Tender as twilight's peace on woodland ways.

I serve his pleasure, wait with ears attent;
Indeed, it well befits me to be meek:
His joy is passed, his fortune has been spent,
And I — he found me when he turned to seek,
In place of bliss, some pale and dull content —
I will be faithful, but I will not speak.

III.

A SECOND PLACE.

I WOULD, indeed, that Heaven had made me meek,
Content to hold and fill a second place,
Take lesser love as undeservèd grace,
And bow my thankful head when one should speak
Me gently, touch with careless hand my cheek,
Or bend sometimes and kiss my unpraised face,
Since she, forsooth, is in her far-off place
For whom his highest homage seemed too weak.

But I was made with passionate, strong soul,
And what I would, I would have wholly mine;
And if I bow my head to Love's control,
And to his keeping all myself consign,
It must be Love that answers to my need,
That loves me wholly, and is Love indeed.

IV.

ALONE IN DEATH.

ALONE in Death I think my heart will be;
I have no dead to wait me in that land,
And if with thee I entered, hand in hand,
When her voice called wouldst thou not turn from me,
And leave me lonely by that jasper sea —
Lonely, forever, on that silent strand,
When with entreaty stronger than command
Her languorous, low tones invited thee?

And she would find my kisses on thy mouth,
And yet forgive thee with a royal grace,
Because, when she had gone, too long the drouth,
The uncheered waiting her divine embrace —
And I, O God! should long to die again,
Yet face my immortality of pain.

V.

FACE TO FACE.

THOU gazest in mine eyes and thine are wet;
Thy hand seeks mine, and clings, and holds me fast;
"The present," dost thou say, "and not the past
Means light and joy and hope. I am beset
With idle fears. Thy heart in my heart met
Its all of love and faith — the spell I cast
Will bind thee, while the soul in thee shall last,
And the next life shall pay this life's dear debt."

Thine eyes seem true! Thy words! Ah *she* can hear!
From her high place I think she sees thee now;
Draw back thine hand, if but one shade of fear
Of her reproach assail thee. I will bow
To Fate's decree — from blame thou shalt be clear —
Thou wilt not? . . . We will face her, — I and thou!

The Still Hour.

The holy time is quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration.

WORDSWORTH.

IN THE PINE WOODS AT MARIENBAD.

DEDICATED TO LOUISA, LADY ASHBURTON.

HERE come we, to this temple strange and vast;
Here is the shadowy stillness meet for prayer,
And here such fragrance breathes upon the air
That it must be Heaven's own high-priests have passed
And to the winds a heavenly incense cast;
Far up against the blue we see them there,
Glad messengers, that on God's errands fare —
Oh may we join their shining ranks at last!

This is the noblest Church was ever reared!
Shall we not enter here to praise and pray,
To kneel within its mighty nave and cry
To Him, our God, beloved of us and feared,
Whose light must guide us on our devious way,
Whose help must reach us, or we helpless die?

AT MARIENBAD, September, 1887.

HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF!

BECAUSE I seek thee not, oh seek Thou me!
Because my lips are dumb, oh hear the cry
I do not utter as Thou passest by,
And from my life-long bondage set me free!
Because content I perish, far from Thee,
Oh seize me, snatch me from my fate, and try
My soul in Thy consuming fire! Draw nigh
And let me, blinded, Thy salvation see.

If I were pouring at Thy feet my tears,
If I were clamoring to see Thy face,
I should not need Thee, Lord, as now I need,
Whose dumb, dead soul knows neither hopes nor fears,
Nor dreads the outer darkness of this place —
Because I seek not, pray not, give Thou heed!

SHALL I LOOK BACK?

FROM some dim height of being, undescried,
Shall I look back and trace the weary way
By which my feet are journeying to-day, —
The toilsome path that climbs the mountain-side
Or leads into the valley, sun-denied,
Where, through the darkness, hapless wanderers stray,
Unblessed, uncheered, ungladdened by a ray
Of certitude their errant steps to guide?

Shall I look back, and see the great things small;
The toilsome path, God's training for my feet,
The pains that never had been worth my tears?
Will some great light of rapture, bathing all,
Make by-gone woe seem joy; past bitter, sweet?
Shall I look back and wonder at my fears?

STRAIGHT ON TO PORT.

STRAIGHT through the sea-foam and the awful sea,
And winds that battle round us day and night,
Till the pale moon hides her white face in fright,
The ship that bears my longing heart and me
Fares toward that port where waiting loved ones be,
And on the hearth of home the fire is bright;
There wistful eyes shall be made glad with sight,
And perils past forgotten joyfully.

So, through long nights, and brief, sad winter days,
Or summer's short-lived triumphs, or young springs,
Or autumn's wind-blown, melancholy ways,
My soul bears onward to her haven far,
Beyond the utmost sea's dim harbor-bar,
There to forget what storms have bruised her wings.

AT SEA, 1884.

A PRAYER IN SORROW.

MY heart is at Thy feet, — my helpless heart!
I pray Thee bend and listen to my prayer;
Bend low, and comfort my most deep despair,
Since my sole help, sole comforter Thou art.
It is thy will that Joy and I should part;
Thy will be done — but have me in Thy care;
Unhelped by Thee the load I cannot bear —
My heart is at Thy feet, my helpless heart.

How can I go alone through life to death,
Confront each empty day and lonely night,
Each doubt and fear my soul that challengeth,
Except Thy strong arm put my foes to flight?
I cry to Thee, who gave my spirit breath —
Save me — O strong to save, as strong to smite!

ON HOMEWARD WING.

FROM the soft south the constant bird comes back,
Faith-led, to find the welcome of the spring
In the old boughs whereto she used to cling
Before she sought the unknown southward track:
Above the Winter and the storm-cloud's wrack
She hears the prophecy of days that bring
The Summer's pride, and plumes her homeward wing
To seek again the joys that exiles lack.

Shall I of little faith, less brave than she,
Set forth unwillingly my goal to find,
Go home from exile with reluctant mind,
Distrust the steadfast stars I cannot see,
And doubt the heavens because my eyes are blind?
Nay! Give me faith like wings to soar to Thee!

IN MID-OCEAN.

ACROSS this sea I sail, and do not know
What hap awaits me on its farther side, —
In these long days what dear hope may have died;
What sweet, accustomed joy I must forego;
What new acquaintance make with unguessed woe
(I, who with sorrow have been long allied,)
Or what blest gleam of joy yet undescried
Its tender light upon my way will throw.

Thus over Death's unsounded sea we sail,
Toward a far, unmapped, unpictured shore,
Unwitting what awaits us, bliss or bale,
Like the vast multitude that went before,
Scourged on by the inexorable gale
The everlasting mystery to explore.

AT SEA, 1888.

AS IN VISION.

SOMETIMES in heaven-sent dreams I do behold
A city with its turrets high in air,
Its gates that gleam with jewels strange and rare,
And streets that glow with burning of red gold;
And happy souls, through blessedness grown bold,
Thrill with their praises all the radiant air,
And God himself is light, and shineth there
On glories tongue of man hath never told.

And in my dreams I thither march, nor stay
To heed earth's voices, howso'er they call,
Or proffers of the joys of this brief day,
On which so soon the sunset shadows fall;
I see the gleaming gates, and toward them press —
What though my path lead through the wilderness?

A PRAYER FOR LIGHT.

I KNEEL before Thee, Lord, oh hear my cry ;
From its sore burden set my spirit free,
And give my longing wings to soar toward Thee
Through the pure ether of the upper sky,
And find Thee, *find Thee,* though Thou art so high !
Give me to eat from that most sacred tree
Whose leaves of healing wave eternally —
Fed full of life by Thee, I shall not die,

Or, dying, die but to be newly born
In that glad day whereof Thou art the light, —
The light whose glories do eclipse the morn,
And blind the sun, and put to death the night —
O Life, O Light, O God, let me be Thine ;
Sun of all worlds, upon my darkness shine !

COME UNTO ME.

I HEAR the low voice call that bids me come, —
Me, even me, with all my grief oppressed,
With sins that burden my unquiet breast,
And in my heart the longing that is dumb,
Yet beats forever, like a muffled drum,
For all delights whereof I, dispossessed,
Pine and repine, and find nor peace nor rest
This side the haven where He bids me come.

He bids me come, and lay my sorrows down,
And have my sins washed white by His dear grace ;
He smiles — what matter, then, though all men frown ?
Naught can assail me, held in His embrace ;
And if His welcome home the end may crown,
Shall I not hasten to that heavenly place ?

A RAINY AFTERNOON:

AT RAGATZ.

DARK are the clouds that hide from longing eyes
The hills that glowed this morning with delight,
When the sun kindled height on shining height,
Pouring his splendor through the eastern skies.
From this dense gloom no Mounts of Vision rise, —
The day forgets the magic of the morn, —
Triumphant Darkness clothes itself with scorn,
And all Hope's auguries Despair defies.

Yet once again the sun shall gild the day,
And once again the sun-kissed hills be glad,
And the vexed Earth go on its ancient way
With all the old exultant joy it had;
And thou, faint heart, shall Darkness thee affright
While He still reigns who said, "Let there be light"?

RAGATZ, September, 1883.

HARK, TEN THOUSAND HARPS AND VOICES!

OH, strong and sweet these tones that seek the sky!
Oh, sweet and strong the praises that I hear!
When all hearts thrill, as one, with love and fear,
And all these voices, as with one voice, cry;
And Fear says, "Tremble, for God's throne is high;"
And Love says, "Trust, because His heart is near,
And all ye children to His heart are dear,
And God is love, and shall in love reply."

And then the music soars, as if on wings,
And echoes fond the ecstasy prolong,
Till waiting choirs of angels catch the song,
And they in heaven and we on earth unite
To sing His praise, and glorify His might,
Till unto God who hears His whole world sings.

Rosemary.

There's rosemary, — that 's for remembrance.

SHAKSPEARE.

Into the night go one and all.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

HIS soul was one with Nature everywhere;
Her seer and prophet and interpreter,
He waited in her courts for love of her,
And told the secrets that he gathered there,—
What flight the wild birds dared; why flowers were fair;
The sense of that divine, tumultuous stir
When Spring awakes, and all sweet things confer,
And youth and hope and joy are in the air.

Do the winds miss him, and the fields he knew,
And the far stars that watched him night by night,
Looking from out their steadfast dome of blue
To lead him onward with their tranquil light;
Or do they know what gates he wandered through,
What heavenly glories opened on his sight?

AN OPEN DOOR.

City, of thine a single, simple door,
By some new Power reduplicate must be
Even yet my life-porch in eternity.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

THAT longed-for door stood open, and he passed
On through the star-sown fields of light, and stayed
Before its threshold, glad and unafraid,
Since all that Life or Death could do at last
Was over, and the hour so long forecast
Had brought his footsteps thither. Undismayed
He entered. Were his lips on her lips laid?
God knows. They met, and their new day was vast:

Night shall not darken it, nor parting blight:
"Whatever is to know," they know it now:
He comes to her with laurel on his brow,
Hero and conqueror from his life's fierce fight,
And Longing is extinguished in Delight, —
"I still am I," his eyes say, "Thou art thou!"

BEHIND THE MIST:

IN THE ROOM WITH GEORGE FULLER'S PICTURES.

HE sent them forth, these softly gleaming shapes,
And said, "Go, ye, and tread enchanted ground;
With veiling mists your paths I will surround,
And shield you from the careless crowd that gapes
On what all men can see. Your charm escapes
Such gaze; by faithful lovers to be found
Behind this tender veil that wraps you round,
And all your soft beguiling gently drapes."

And these fair people, whom his hand had made,
And touched with sudden beauty, strange and sweet
As the young Morn by the first Sun-ray kissed,
Live here, immortally and unafraid,
While he — who can pursue his journeying feet?
He has gone on, and up, behind the Mist.

HER GHOST.

IN MEMORY OF CICELEY NARNEY MARSTON.

I.

HER gentle ghost is with me everywhere !
'T was here she came, one summer day, to die ;
Whispered my name, and then, all silently,
Laid her loved head upon the pillow there
And spoke no more. That summer day was fair
And very glad with joyous minstrelsy
Of choiring birds, and heedless gayety
Of small, bright things who of the sun were 'ware :

But, in the midmost glow of life, on Death
She sudden chanced : he closed her dear, dark eyes ;
The air grew heavy with her parting breath,
And Nature seemed to shiver in surprise ;
And then the things that morning had begun
Fared on — she too, like them, had sought the sun.

II.

NOW with the summer she has come again:
Outside the birds sing as they sang that day,
And summer things upon the air are gay;
But she sits speechless, and her eyes are fain
To hide from me their mystery of pain. . . .
From heaven to earth, oh, dim and far the way!
Why hast thou come? Be merciful and say —
Of what strange wrong do thy veiled looks complain?

Hast thou brought back sad secrets from the skies;
Or is it that the old days haunt thee still?
Is that immortal sorrow in thine eyes
Token of longings Heaven could not fulfil?
Dear ghost, I pray thee answer, and forego
The stern resolve of thy unspoken woe.

III.

THOU wilt not speak! Day after silent day
Thou sittest with me in this lonesome place:
The morning sunlight falls upon thy face;
Night comes, and thou and Night together stay, —
No sunshine warms thee, and no storms dismay.
I stretch my empty arms for thine embrace
Thou glidest from them with elusive grace:
Thine unresponsive lips will never say

The thing I long to hear; yet do I think,
From me to thee, the living to the dead,
Waiting together on the hither brink
Of Death's great middle sea, some influence shed
Must make thee know how now I hold thee dear,
Who loved thee not enough that other year.

AT END OF PAIN.

TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

THY darkened life is over. Thou hast found
That sweet, deep rest, which, through such lonesome days,
And nights when sleep forsook thee, thou didst praise
With envious longing. In Death's silence drowned,
No clamoring bells with their intrusive sound,
No noise of traffic in the city's maze,
Or hurrying footsteps through its stony ways,
Will vex the slumber in which thou art bound.

Tired head, tired heart, tired spirit, all at rest;
Since for the weary rest is Death's first boon, —
Rest; and then, after rest, the waking joy;
The sudden rapture, by new life possessed;
The swift, sure glory of the Heaven's high noon;
The long-lost mother's welcome to her boy!

A SILENT GUEST.

TO H. E. C.

WE sit and chat in the familiar place, —
We two, where in those other years were three, —
Till, suddenly, you turn your eyes from me,
And in the empty air I see a face,
Serenely smiling with the old-time grace,
And we are three again. All silently
The third guest entered; and as silent we,
Held mute by very awe for some brief space.

And then we question — Has he come to stay?
Was heaven lonely to the child of earth?
Was there no nectar in immortal bliss
For lips that thirsted for a mortal kiss?
Has the new lesson taught the old love's worth?
The still ghost hears, and smiles, and — goes his way.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

IN MEMORIAM.

AS the wind at play with a spark
Of fire that glows through the night;
As the speed of the soaring lark
That wings to the sky his flight;
So swiftly thy soul has sped
On its upward, wonderful way,
Like the lark, when the dawn is red,
In search of the shining day.

Thou art not with the frozen dead
Whom earth in the earth we lay,
While the bearers softly tread,
And the mourners kneel and pray;
From thy semblance, dumb and stark,
The soul has taken its flight —
Out of the finite dark,
Into the Infinite Light.

French Tunes.

Friend, let us pay the wonted fee.

ANDREW LANG.

Then let me live one long romance
  And learn to trifle well,
And write my motto "Vive la France!"
  And "Vive la bagatelle!"

WILLIAM MACKWORTH PRAED.

THE SPRING IS HERE.

I MISS you, sweet! The spring is here;
The young grass trembles on the leas;
The violet's breath enchants the breeze;
And the blue sky bends low and near.

Home-coming birds, with carol clear,
Make their new nests in budding trees —
I miss you, sweet, now spring is here,
And young grass trembles on the leas.

You were my Spring, and spring is dear;
Without you can the May-time please?
Let lavish June withhold her fees,
And winter reign throughout the year —
I miss you, sweet, though spring is here.

EASTER SUNDAY.

ON Easter morn she kneels and prays,
A gentle saint in baby blue—
Forgive her that her hat is new,
And all those dear, coquettish ways.

Her loyal soul pure tribute pays
To that high throne where prayers are due,
At Easter, when she kneels and prays,
A gentle saint in baby blue.

So innocent her girlish days
She scarcely knows what sins to rue,
What pard'ning grace from Heaven to sue,
As, glad with morning's gladdest rays,
A gentle saint, she kneels and prays.

HEART, SAD HEART.

HEART, sad heart, for what are you pleading?
The sun has set, and the night is cold;
To go on hoping were over bold;
Dead is the fire for want of feeding.

Tears are keeping your eyes from reading
The old, old story, so often told —
Heart, sad heart, for what are you pleading?
The sun has set, and the night is cold.

The wind and the rain in the dark are breeding
Storms to sweep over valley and wold;
Love, the outcast, with longing bold,
Clamors and prays to a power unheeding.
Heart, sad heart, for what are you pleading?

TWO RED ROSES.

TO M. R. L.

I WISH they could live forever, —
These roses my darling brought!
Their breath from her lips they caught,
And still with her touch they quiver.

As bright as their bright sweet giver,
With a charm like her own charm fraught,
I wish they could live forever, —
These roses my darling brought!

But loving from loved must sever,
And hoping must come to nought —
I know what the years have taught;
Yet I wish they could live forever, —
These roses my darling brought.

THE SHADOW DANCE.

SHE sees her image in the glass, —
How fair a thing to gaze upon!
She lingers while the moments run,
With happy thoughts that come and pass,

Like winds across the meadow grass
When the young June is just begun:
She sees her image in the glass, —
How fair a thing to gaze upon!

What wealth of gold the skies amass!
How glad are all things 'neath the sun!
How true the love her love has won!
She recks not that this hour will pass;
She sees her image in the glass.

IN FEBRUARY.

And the second month of the year
Puts heart in the earth again.

P. B. MARSTON.

ALREADY the feet of the Winter fly,
And the pulse of the Earth begins to leap,
Waking up from her frozen sleep,
And knowing the beautiful Spring is nigh.

Good Saint Valentine wanders by,
Pausing his festival gay to keep;
Already the feet of the Winter fly,
And the pulse of the Earth begins to leap.

To life she wakes; and a smile and a sigh —
Language the scoffer holds so cheap —
Thrill her with melody dear and deep.
Spring, with its mating time is nigh;
Already the feet of the Winter fly,
And the pulse of the Earth begins to leap.

THE OLD BEAU.

HE was a gay deceiver when
The century was young, they say,
And triumphed over other men,
And wooed the girls, and had his way.

No maiden ever said him nay;
No rival ever crossed him then;
And painters vied to paint him when
The century was young, they say.

Now the new dogs must have their day;
And the old beau has found that when
He pleads things go another way,
And lonely 'mong the younger men,
He hears their heartless laughter when
He boasts about that other day.

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER,

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

POET and friend, beloved of us so long,
What shall we wish thee on thy natal day?
What rhymes and roses strew along thy way, —
Thine, unto whom all suffrages belong?

Through the dark night we caught thy thrilling song,
Singer and prophet of the higher way:
Poet and friend beloved of us so long,
What shall we wish thee on thy natal day?

Through all thy life the foe of every wrong,
Strong of heart to labor, high of soul to pray,
Guide to recall when errant footsteps stray;
What blessed memories round thy dear name throng!
Poet and friend, beloved of us so long,
God bless and keep thee on thy natal day!

"WITH THOSE CLEAR EYES."

TO A. C. W.

LOOK at me, love, with those clear eyes
In which I see the thoughts arise,
As, gazing in a limpid well,
Unto Narcissus it befell
To see himself with glad surprise.

Blue with the blue of summer skies, —
Dear skies, behind which heaven lies, —
With one swift gaze my gloom dispel.
Look at me, love!

See all my heart! Its weakest cries,
Its lonely prayers, its longing sighs,
A language are which you can spell;
You do not need what words can tell
On printed page to make you wise.
Look at me, love!

LOVE'S GHOST.

IS Love at end? How did he go?
His coming was full sweet, I know;
But when he went he slipped away
And never paused to say good-day —
How could the traitor leave me so?

There 's something in the summer, though,
That brings the old time back, and lo!
This phantom that would bar my way
Is dead Love's ghost.

His footfall is as soft as snow,
And in his path the lilies blow;
He quenches the just-kindled ray
With which I fain would light my way,
And bids me newer joys forego,
This tyrant ghost.

HOW COULD I TELL?

HOW could I tell skies would be gray
When you, dear heart, had gone away?
How could I know the summer sun
Was glad of you to look upon,
And it was you who warmed the day?

What part you had to make the May,
And how the very June was gay
With something from your presence won,
How could I tell?

When you were here, a fervid ray
Of sudden summer lit my way;
Now you with love and life are done,
The very light seems me to shun,
And through the dark I darkly stray —
How could I tell?

WHEN LOVE WAS YOUNG.

WHEN Love was young, in days of yore,
On bended knee full oft I swore
To him alone I 'd homage pay;
I 'd love forever and a day,
And love with every day the more.

I sang his praises o'er and o'er;
I conned no missal but his lore —
Oh, but the world and I were gay
When Love was young!

His blazonry the morning bore,
And all the larks that sing and soar
Praised him upon their skyward way.
. . . Ah, happy choir of yesterday,
When Love was young!

IF LOVE COULD LAST.

IF Love could last, I 'd spend my all
And think the price were yet too small
To buy his light upon my way,
His sun to turn my night to day,
His cheer whatever might befall.

Were I his slave, or he my thrall,
No terrors should my heart appall;
I 'd fear no wreckage or dismay
If Love could last.

Heaven's lilies grow up white and tall,
But warm within earth's garden wall
With roses red the soft winds play —
Ah, might I gather them to-day!
My hands should never let them fall,
If Love *could* last.

O SWEETEST MAID!

TO M. R. L.

O SWEETEST maid, in other days
The troubadours had sung your praise,
And knights had died and joyed to die
To win a smile as you passed by,
While lord and lackey stood at gaze.

What wonder that the task dismays
To wreathe your brow with modern bays,
Or rhyming tricks for you to try,
O sweetest maid!

For you should be those loftier lays
Of which from far the echo strays,
In matchless, murmurous melody
That dies in Love's divinest sigh —
Still Love's strong will my rhyme obeys,
O sweetest maid!

IF YOU WERE HERE.

TO F. M. S.

IF you were here, or I were there,
Then would I find the season fair.
How blissfully the day would rise!
How blue would be the summer skies!
And all the world a smile would wear.

What pleasant things we two would share!
By what green paths we two would fare!
How sweet would be each day's surprise
If you were here!

But now my joy is otherwhere;
Each day's a burden that I bear;
And Pleasure mocks at me and flies,
And Pain stands by my side and sighs;
And yet I know skies would be fair
If you were here.

SUCH JOY IT WAS.

SUCH joy it was with Love to walk !
The month it was the month of May
When we with Love began to talk.
Such joy it was with Love to walk
We did not see Fate's shadow stalk
Beside us, where flowers hid the way,
Such joy it was with Love to walk —
The month it was the month of May.

WE LOVED SO WELL.

WE loved so well in that old time;
But we and Love grew old together:
Old age forgets youth's golden prime.
We loved so well in that old time;
But youth and truth it is that rhyme,
And winter follows summer weather.
We loved so well in that old time;
But we and Love grew old together.

SO BLITHELY ROSE.

SO blithely rose the happy day
When you and I began to kiss,
The birds believed December May,
So blithely rose the happy day,
And blossoms bloomed along our way,
Though it was time for snow, I wis, —
So blithely rose the happy day
When you and I began to kiss.

THISTLE-DOWN.

THISTLE-DOWN is a woman's love, —
Thistle-down with the wind at play.
Let him who wills this truth to prove,
"Thistle-down is a woman's love,"
Seek her innermost heart to move.
Though the wind should blow her vows his way,
Thistle-down is a woman's love, —
Thistle-down with the wind at play.

LOVE PLUMES HIS WINGS.

LOVE plumes his wings to fly away,
And laughs to scorn our idle pain:
Ah, vain it is to laugh and pray!
Love plumes his wings to fly away:
What prayer of ours his flight can stay
When, mocking us with high disdain,
Love plumes his wings to fly away,
And laughs to scorn our idle pain?

IN WINTER.

OH, to go back to the days of June,
Just to be young and alive again,
Hearken again to the mad sweet tune
Birds were singing with might and main!
South they flew at the summer's wane,
Leaving their nests for storms to harry,
Since time was coming for wind and rain
Under the wintry skies to marry.

Wearily wander by dale and dune
Footsteps fettered with clanking chain:
Free they were in the days of June;
Free they never can be again.
Fetters of age and fetters of pain,
Joys that fly, and sorrows that tarry;
Youth is over, and hope were vain
Under the wintry skies to marry.

Now we chant but a desolate rune, —
"Oh, to be young and alive again!"
But never December turns to June,
And length of living is length of pain.

Winds in the nestless trees complain;
Snows of winter about us tarry;
And never the birds come back again
Under the wintry skies to marry.

ENVOI.

Youths and maidens, blithesome and vain,
Time makes thrusts that you cannot parry;
Mate in season, for who is fain
Under the wintry skies to marry?

AT THE WIND'S WILL.

I had walked on at the wind's will, —
I sat now, for the wind was still.

D. G. Rossetti.

AT THE WIND'S WILL.

SO far, so far have I come,
Blown by the Wind of Fate:
Whither? The Voice is dumb.—
The Silence dismays me, I wait.

The Sunshine mocks me at morn,
The Stars deride me at night;
Shall strength in my soul be born
To triumph over their slight?

Shall I live when their fires are out?
Shall I reach where they cannot go?
Ah, Fate, resolve me the doubt,—
Blow on, strong Wind! I will know.

TO HOPE.

Undying Hope, Memory's immortal heir,
To thee I consecrate this sheaf of song, —
In darkest gloom of thee I am aware;
Thy magic is to make the weak soul strong.

Lyrics.

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part
To sleep for a season, and hear no word
Of true love's truth, or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

A. C. Swinburne.

Shall I not tell my dream in a song?

Philip Bourke Marston.

AT THE WIND'S WILL.

SONGS AT SEA.

I HAVE been lonely the whole day long;
Come and find me to-night with a song;
Sing to me now, when the wind is low,
And my heart shall answer as on we go;
Listen and answer, and none shall know.

Over the brooding, wonderful sea
The song that is sung alone for me
Floats, and none other its strain can hear,
Or catch the music, subtle and dear,
Of the delicate singing that seeks my ear.

The West is red with the sunset's glow;
In the East the moon is hanging low;
And fast and far the light winds flee,
As I sail, with your songs for company,
'Twixt the silent sky and the silent sea.

Do these birds of song need a sheltering nest?
See! I will hide them warm in my breast;
There shall they fold their venturous wing,
And all the night through nestle and sing
Songs of love and of sorrowing.

Then, when the morning is young and gay,
Up from their shelter and far away!
And, like carrier doves, they shall bear as they flee
The echoes of all they have sung to me
Alone with the night and the wind and the sea; —

The echoes of passion's divine despair,
The bliss and the bane of a lover's prayer,
All the delicate singing that none might hear;
And the answer my heart shall send, my dear,
On the breath of the morning fine and clear.

ON A ROSE PRESSED IN A BOOK.

I WIN the summer back again
At touch of this dead rose. —
O lavish joy! O tender pain!
The very June wind blows,
And thrills me with the old refrain
Whose music my heart knows:
I win the summer back again
At touch of this dead rose.

Ah, lost is all the summer's gain,
And lost my heart's repose;
And was it tears or was it rain
That wept the season's close?
The winter suns they coldly wane;
White fall the winter snows:
But Love and Summer come again
At touch of this dead rose.

THE SUN IS LOW.

I SIT and wait for you, Dear, my Dear,
Now the sun is low;
From the far-off town the path runs clear,
And the way you know —
The old, old way that brought you here,
In the Long-Ago.

The white moon climbs, and looks at me —
Her smile is cold;
Something she sees that I do not see —
The moon is old.

I catch a sigh from the winds that flee
Across the wold —
What is the secret they hide from me? —
They have not told.

To Lethe-country your steps were set —
Did you taste that spring
That makes the heart of a man forget
The dearest thing?

Nay! I sit and wait for you, Dear, my Dear,
For the sun is low —
From your far-off place the path runs clear,
And you still must know
The old, old way that brought you here
In the Long-Ago.

THE SECRET OF ARCADY.

I HIED me off to Arcady —
The month it was the month of May,
And all along the pleasant way
The morning birds were mad with glee,
And all the flowers sprang up to see,
As I went on to Arcady.

But slow I fared to Arcady —
The way was long, the winding way —
Sometimes I watched the children play,
And then I laid me down to see
The great white clouds sail over me —
I thought they sailed to Arcady.

Then by me sped to Arcady
Two lovers, each on palfrey gray,
And blithe with love, and blithe with May,
And they were rich, and held in fee
The whole round world: and Youth is he
Who knows the path to Arcady.

I followed on to Arcady —
But I was all alone that day,
And shadows stole along the way,

And somehow I had lost the key
That makes an errant mortal free
Of the dear fields of Arcady.

But still I fared toward Arcady,
Until I slept at set of day,
And in my dreams I found the way;
And all the Fates were kind to me;
So that I woke beneath a tree
In the dear land of Arcady.

What did I find in Arcady? —
Ah, that I never must betray:
I learned the secrets of the May;
And why the winds are fresh and free,
And all the birds are mad with glee
That soar and sing in Arcady.

I dwell no more in Arcady: —
But when the sky is blue with May,
And flowers spring up along the way,
And birds are blithe, and winds are free,
I know what message is for me, —
For I have been in Arcady.

AT NIGHT'S HIGH NOON.

UNDER the heavy sod she lies —
I saw them close her beautiful eyes —
She lies so still, and she lies so deep,
That all of them think she is fast asleep.

I, only, know at the night's high noon
She comes from the grave they made too soon:
I see the light of her cold, bright eyes,
As I see the stars in the wintry skies.

The scornful gleam of an old surprise
Is still alive in those wonderful eyes —
And the mocking lips are ripe and red,
Smiling, still, at the words I said.

She mocks me now, as she mocked me then: —
'Dead is dead,' say the world of men —
But I know when the stars of midnight rise
She shines on me with her cold, bright eyes.

THE VOICE OF SPRING.

IT was the Voice of Spring —
  That faint, far cry —
And birds began to sing,
  And winds blew by.

And up the blossoms got —
  They knew the call : —
The blue Forget-me-not,
  The Lily, tall,

And Mayflowers, pink and white
  As any lass,
Sprang up, for heart's delight,
  Among the grass.

The happy world is fain
  To hail the feet
Of Spring, who comes again,
  Spring that is sweet.

Let us, dear Heart, rejoice —
  You, Love, and I ;
We, too, have heard the Voice,
  Our Spring is nigh.

IN EXTREMIS.

HOW can I go into the dark,
Away from your clasping hand,
Set sail on a shadowy bark
For the shore of an unknown land?

Your eyes look love into mine;
Your lips are warm on my mouth;
I drink your breath like a wine
Aglow with the sun of the South.

You have made this world so dear!
How can I go forth alone
In the bark that phantoms steer
To a port afar and unknown?

The desperate mob of the dead,
Will they hustle me to and fro,
Or leave me alone to tread
The path of my infinite woe?

Shall I cry, in terror and pain,
For a death that I cannot die,
And pray with a longing vain
To the gods that mock my cry?

Oh, hold me closer, my dear!
Strong is your clasp, — ay, strong, —
But stronger the touch that I fear,
And the darkness to come is long.

WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG.

IN Summer, when the days are long,
The roses and the lilies talk —
Beneath the trees young lovers walk,
And glad birds coo their wooing song.

In Autumn, when the days are brief,
Roses and lilies turn to dust —
Lovers grow old, as all men must,
And birds shun trees that have no leaf.

Then, youth, be glad, in love's brief day!
Pluck life's best blossom while you can —
Time has his will of every man —
From leafless hearts love turns away.

AT THE END.

TIME was when Love's dear ways I used to know —
That time 's at end, and Love has passed me by:
Be merciful, dear God, and let me die —
How can I lift my head from this last blow?

I cannot bear this life whence Faith has fled —
This jostling world in which I walk alone —
Where through long, lonesome nights old memories moan,
With human voices, that the dead is dead.

I cannot bear to meet the day's cold eyes —
The lonesome nights are bitter with my tears—
Shuddering I face the empty hideous years,
Sure that no trumpet 's call will bid my dead arise.

Since Love 's at end, be merciful, oh God! . . . .
I ask no new-born hope, but only this, —
That I may die as died that vanished bliss,
And hide my fruitless pain 'neath some green sod.

Yet there — if the strong soul in me live on —
How deep soe'er the grave, what hope of rest?
Still shall I be discrowned and dispossest,
And find new tortures with new life begun.

The Heavens are deaf! No answer comes to prayer —
I face the cold scorn of the risen day —
Since Love that was my life has turned away,
And left me for companion my Despair.

TO SLEEP.

COME Sleep, and kiss mine eyelids down;
Let me forget
Hope 's treachery, and Fortune 's frown,
And Life 's vain fret.

And would you hold me fast, dear Sleep,
I need not wake,
Since they wake not who used to weep
For my poor sake.

WHEN YOU ARE DEAD.

A LOVER SPEAKS.

WHEN you are dead, my dainty dear,
And buried 'neath the grass,
Will something of you linger near,
And know me if I pass?

Last night you wore a wild, sweet rose,
To match your sweet, wild grace —
The only flower on earth that grows
I liken to your face.

I would that I that rose had been,
To bloom upon your breast!
One golden hour I should have seen —
What matter for the rest?

To-day you will not grant my prayer,
Or listen while I plead —
But when you dwell alone, down there,
It may be you will heed;

And then your silent heart will stir
With some divine, sweet thrill,
To know that I, your worshipper,
Through death am faithful still;

And something of you, lingering near,
May bless me if I pass —
When you are dead, my dainty dear,
And buried 'neath the grass.

THE BIRDS AND I.

A THOUSAND voices whisper it is spring;
Shy flowers start up to greet me on the way,
And homing birds preen their swift wings and sing
The praises of the friendly, lengthening day.

The buds whose breath the glad wind hither bears,
Whose tender secret the young May shall find,
Seem all for me — for me the softer airs,
The gentle warmth, wherewith the day is kind.

Let me rejoice, now skies are blue and bright,
And the round world pays tribute to the spring;
The birds and I will carol our delight,
And every breeze Love's messages shall bring.

What matter though sometimes the cup of tears
We drink, instead of the rich wine of mirth?
There are as many springs as there are years;
And, glad or sad, we love this dear old Earth.

Shall we come back, like birds, from some far
sphere —
We and the Spring together — and be glad
With the old joy to hail the sweet young year,
And to remember what good days we had?

THE BIRDS COME BACK.

THE birds come back to their last year's nest,
And the wild-rose nods in the lane;
And gold in the east, and red in the west,
The sun bestirs him again.

The thief-bee rifles the hawthorn flower;
And the breezes softly sigh
For the columbine in my lady's bower,
And then at her feet they die.

And all the pomp of the June is here —
The mirth and passion and song;
And young is the summer, and life is dear,
And the day is never too long.

Ah! birds come back to their last year's nest,
And the wild-rose laughs in the lane;
But I turn to the east and I turn to the west —
"She never will come again."

A WINTER'S DAWN.

AFTER the long and dreary night
I wake to the blessed morning light,
And the white surprise of the snow.
Dreams have mocked me the dark hours through;
And something cried on the winds that blew
Across the country that dreamers know.

Back from the memory-haunted ways
We trod together in by-gone days,
Came a voice — was it yours, my dear? —
Oh, was it yours? Did I hear you plead,
As I heard you once, when I would not heed —
In that far-off land — in that by-gone year?

Wild is my heart, with its hopeless pain —
Oh, for one hour of the past again! —
One brief, bright hour — one least little touch!
Do you forgive me the words I said,
As you look back from the realm of the dead? —
Much is forgiven, when one loves much.

Grief makes wise; for I knew not then,
While you were alive in the world of men,
How the heart of my heart would starve and
die,

When you should be gone, beyond my reach,
Where the death-tide breaks on a ghostly beach,
And spirits bereft on the night wind cry.

Spent and done is the lonesome night,
And the sun of the morning is strong and bright—
The sun is bright and the sky is clear —
Yet better the dark, and the winds that blow
Across the country that dreamers know,
And the voice that calls from a by-gone year.

THE LURE.

WHENCE did the music come, my Dear,
That wooed you into the waiting Night,
The song you heard that I could not hear,
The song you followed, my Heart's Delight?

The moon was full, and the sky was clear—
How did you hide from my longing sight?
Into the Dark we vainly peer,
But I looked as vainly into the Light.

Does an echo come to my listening ear
Of music dropped from some far-off height?...
Nay, I do but dream, for I did not hear
The song that lured you into the Night.

DEAD MEN'S HOLIDAY.

AFTER SHIPKA.

Every one kept holiday — except the dead.
VERESTSCHAGIN.

WHO dares to say the dead men were not glad,
When all the banners flaunted triumph there
And soldiers tossed their caps into the air,
And cheered, and cheered as they with joy were mad?

Proudly the General galloped down the line,
And shouted thanks and praise to all his men,
And the free echoes tossed it back again,
And the keen air stung all their lips like wine.

And there, in front, the dead lay silently —
They who had given their lives the fight to win —
Were their ears deaf, think you, to all the din,
And their eyes blinded that they could not see?

I tell you, no! They heard, and hearing knew
How brief a thing this triumph of a day,
From which men journey on, the same old way,
The same old snares and pitfalls struggle through.

Theirs the true triumph, for their fight was done ;
And with low laughter called they, each to each —
" We are at rest, where foemen cannot reach,
And better this than fighting in the sun."

WHEN YOU WERE HERE.

WHEN you, my love, were here
My voice was full and loud —
I sang to catch your ear:
Now you are in your shroud
I cannot sing for fear.

That vague world is so near —
Beyond its veil of cloud —
Where you abide, my dear,
If I should sing too loud
Who knows but you would hear?

And then your heart would break
With pity, for my sake.

BECAUSE IT IS THE SPRING.

I will be glad because it is the spring.
AMY LEVY.

SHALL I be glad because the year is young?
The shy, swift-coming green is on the trees;
The jonquil's passion to the wind is flung;
I catch the Mayflower's breath upon the breeze.

The birds, aware that mating-time has come,
Swell their plumed, tuneful throats with love and glee;
The streams, beneath the winter's thraldom dumb,
Set free at last, run singing to the sea.

Shall I be glad because the year is young?
Nay; you yourself were young that other year:
Though sad and low the tender songs you sung,
My fond heart heard them, and stood still to hear.

Can I forget the day you said good-by,
And robbed the world and me for alien spheres?
Do I not know, when wild winds sob and die,
Your voice is on them, sadder than my tears?

You come to tell me heaven itself is cold, —
  The world was warm from which you fled
    away, —
And moon and stars and sun are very old —
  And you? — oh, you were young in last year's
    May:

Now you, who were the very heart of spring,
  Are old, and share the secrets of the skies;
But I lack something that no year will bring,
  Since May no longer greets me with your eyes.

HER PICTURE.

FAIR face the Greeks had worshipped, have you
come
With me to make your home?
You look at me with those deep, haunting eyes,
And all my life replies.

The silence thrills with vague, bewitching tone;
I am no more alone:
I who have sat upon the shore of Time,
Coaxing my lute to rhyme,

Feel in my heart, at impulse of your will,
Youth's eager music thrill;
And since the years have left me not so old,
Now their long tale is told,

But I can love the lovely, and be glad,
I hide the cypress wreath I had
For garland, and adorn me with the rose
That in your garden glows.

A VIOLET SPEAKS.

O PASSER-BY, draw near!
Upon a grave I grow;
That she who died was dear
They planted me to show.

Pluck me as you go by —
I am her messenger;
With her sweet breath I sigh;
In me her pulses stir.

Through these my quivering leaves
She fain would speak to you —
She whom the grave bereaves
Of the dear life she knew.

"How glad I was up there!"
She whispers underground.
"Have they who found me fair
Some other fair one found?

"Has he who loved me best
Learned Love's deep lore again,
Since I was laid to rest
Far from the world of men?

"Nay! Surely he will come
To dwell here at the last;
In Death's strange silent home
My hand shall hold him fast.

"Yet would that he might know
How hard it is to bide
In darkness here below
And miss him from my side!

"Fain would I send my soul
To lie upon his breast,
And breathe to him Love's whole
That life left unconfest."

Ah, pluck me, passer-by!
For I would bear her breath —
Undying Love's own sigh —
To him who flees from Death.

LEGEND OF A TOMB IN FLORENCE.

HERE he is, in marble, waiting by a tomb —
Strong-winged for flying, yet, the legends say,
Waiting till a maiden buried here below
Shall break forth and join him once again, some day.

Long ago she lived here, in this Town of Flowers —
She herself a blossom brighter than the rest —
Myrtles blue as Heaven, lilies saintly white,
Ne'er a one was worthy to bloom upon her breast.

Here he saw and loved her — he, the gallant Knight,
Loved this gracious Lady, fairer than the May;
Loved her, and won her, Flower of all Delight —
Then Death, the Robber, stole his love away.

By her grave he waited, years on weary years,
Sure that Love would sometime triumph over Fate,
Till at length, o'er-tired, he too must go to sleep;
Then he bade them carve him, still by her to wait —

But with wings for flying, so that when she came
From her narrow chamber he could bear her high,
Over seas and mountains, past the bars of Earth,
To a spacious dwelling somewhere in the sky.

Still the summons comes not — long their silent dream —
But the watching seraphs pity them, I know,
And the tomb will open, and the dead will rise,
And the Knight and Lady Heavenward will go.

THE SUMMER'S QUEEN.

I CHANT the praises of the regal June,
Fair Queen of all the Twelve months' circling sphere,
Hands full of roses, and sweet lips in tune
To all the mirth and music of the year.

How gay and glad you are, fair Lady mine!
How proud of conquered world and lavish sun,
And air that sparkles like celestial wine,
And laughing streams that frolic as they run!

You sow the fields with lilies — wake the choir
Of summer birds to chorus of delight;
Yours is the year's deep rapture — yours the fire
That burns the West, and ushers in the night —

The short, sweet night — that almost can deceive,
So bright its moon, the birds to sing again,
And fit their morning carols to the eve,
And wake the midnight with the noontide strain.

O June, fair Queen of sunshine and of flowers,
The affluent year will hold you not again —
Once, only once, can Youth and Love be ours,
And after them the autumn and the rain.

BEND LOW AND HARK.

BEND low and hark with me, my Dear,
How the winds sigh!
A voice is on them that I fear,
It brings the by-gone days so near,
Like a soul's cry.

Those whom we bury out of sight —
How still they lie!
Beyond the reaches of the Light,
Outside the realm of Day and Night —
Do they not die?

Shall we unbar the long-shut door —
You, Dear, or I? —
Could Love be what Love was before
If we should call them back once more,
And they reply?

Would they Life's largess claim again?
. . . They draw too nigh.
Oh, winds, be still! You shall not pain
My heart with that long-hushed refrain
As you sweep by.

The Dead have had their shining day —
Why should they try
To listen to the words we say —
To breathe their blight upon our May —
. . . Yet the winds sigh.

A SONG FOR ROSALYS.

ROSES lean from their slender stalks —
Oh, but the summer is just begun!
Through her garden Rosalys walks,
And the world is warm with the sun.

Roses and maiden and year
All blooming together;
Heigho, it is good to be here,
In the summer weather!

Love thrives well when the days are long,
And hearts, like the summer, are young and gay.
Words turn to music, and hope grows strong;
But the best is what we can never say.

Oh, once, just once, to be glad once more,
To listen to words that we heard of old,
To steal again through Youth's open door,
And thrill to the story that then was told!

But never twice is a woman young,
And never twice to the year comes June,
And Age is the echo of songs once sung,
With never again the time or the tune.

Roses and maiden and year
All blooming together;
Heigho, it is good to be here,
In the summer weather!

THE GENTLE GHOST OF JOY.

A LITTLE while ago you knew not I was I —
A little while ago I knew not you were you —
Now the swift hours have run by,
And all the world is new.
I hear the young birds sing
In the rosy light of morn;
Like them I could take wing,
And sing as newly born.

A little while from now I shall be far away —
A little while from now your face I shall not see —
But within my heart a ray
To light the dark will be.
Do you not know that pain
So sad, so sweet, so coy,
That comes, and comes again,
The gentle ghost of Joy?

Ah, that shall dwell with me,
When your face I do not see!

WHEN I WANDER AWAY WITH DEATH.

THIS Life is a fleeting breath,
And whither and how shall I go,
When I wander away with Death
By a path that I do not know?

Shall I find the throne of the Moon,
And kneel with her lovers there
To pray for a cold, sweet boon
From her beauty cold and fair?

Or shall I make haste to the Sun,
And warm at his passionate fire
My heart by sorrow undone,
And sick with a vain desire?

Shall I steal into Twilight-Land,
When the Sun and the Moon are low,
And hark to the furtive band
Of the winds that whispering go —

Telling and telling again,
And crooning with scornful mirth,
The secrets of women and men
They overheard on the earth?

Will the dead birds sing once more,
And the nightingale's note be sad
With the passion and longing of yore,
And the thrushes with joy go mad?

Nay, what though they carol again,
And the flowers spring to life at my feet,
Can they heal the sting of my pain,
Or quicken a dead heart's beat?

What care I for Moon or for stars,
Or the Sun on his royal way?
Only somewhere, beyond Earth's bars,
Let me find Love's long-lost day.

HAS LAVISH SUMMER BROUGHT THE ROSE?

HAS lavish summer brought the rose?
Why did my heart not know,
When every gossip wind that blows
Made haste to tell me so;

And all the birds went mad with glee,
And sang from morn till night;
And then the stars came out to see
What made the world so bright?

But I missed something from the time,
And so I did not guess
The meaning of the summer's rhyme,
Or the warm wind's caress.

Can gladness be where she is not?
Can roses bud and blow?
Does all the world but me forget
What now we must forego?

I care not for the day's kind grace, —
The magic of the night, —
Since with them comes no more the face
That was my heart's delight.

A LOST EDEN.

AH, it was a lonely place,
Where I walked to-day —
That old Garden of Delights,
Where we used to stray.

She is far, whose hand I held
In that bygone time —
Where the summer roses laughed
Clings the winter's rime.

Helen, stately, Helen fair,
Where are you to-night?
Do you gather brighter blooms,
Tranced in new delight?

I remember how you stood —
You who wrought my woe —
Wiling me with strange, sweet smile,
When the sun was low;

And I lingered by your side
Till the stars arose
And looked down with curious eyes
On that Garden Close.

Now you wander, who knows where,
Helen, fair and glad,
Deaf to whispers from the past—
Why should I be sad?

THE MOOD OF A MAN.

THROUGH the silence come to mock me
Ancient questions and replies;
A remembered glory blinds me,
From the shining of her eyes.

Though this Southern sun is glowing,
And this alien sky is fair,
Still between me and the sunshine
Waves the pale gold of her hair.

In these unfamiliar places
Her familiar face I see, —
Scornful in its mocking beauty,
Always pitiless for me.

But her scorn no longer moves me —
Reft of hope is free from fear —
So her very coldness warms me,
Her remoteness brings me near.

JUNE'S DAUGHTER.

FAIR Lady June, proud Queen of all the year,
With blossom-sceptre in thy royal hand —
Vaunt not thyself: though long thy days and dear.
Thy days and thee Time's sway cannot withstand.

Thy splendid sun may kindle the proud morn;
And the high noon may glow with love of thee:
Sunset shall laugh thy longest day to scorn,
And mocking stars its overthrow shall see.

Roses shall wither, though their lavish praise
The nightingales have chanted all night long:
Their fragrant ghosts shall throng the silent ways
Those swift-winged laureates once thrilled with song.

And thou, fair Maid, bright daughter of the June,
Dost thou not know thy youth, like hers, is brief? —
For thee the glad day, and the bird's glad tune;
And then the waning year, the wind-blown leaf.

The rising stars shall mock thy setting sun,
And watch with curious eyes thy fallen state:
Glad month! glad maid!—for both the swift sands run—
And not for month or maid shall Autumn wait.

A SUMMER WOOING.

THE wind went wooing the rose,
For the rose was fair.
How the rough wind won her, who knows?
But he left her there.
Far away from her grave he blows:
Does the free wind care?

I HAVE CALLED THEE MANY A NIGHT.

I HAVE called thee many a night,
While the rest were sleeping;
Thou wert deaf to all I said,
Heedless of my weeping.

Wilt thou never hear again,
Howsoe'er I pray thee?
Then must I go forth to seek,
On thy way waylay thee.

Shall I find, beyond the sun,
Some Celestial Garden?
Shall I kneel there at thy feet,
Clamor for thy pardon?

Nay; how can I wait so long?
Wilt thou not draw near me?
Wingèd winds are steeds of thine —
Let them hither bear thee.

Long my ear waits for thy words.
How can I forego thee?
Ah! for one brief hour come back,
Let me see and know thee.

A WHISPER TO THE MOON.

BEND low, O Moon, for I fain would tell
My secret to thee, who can keep it well,
And not to the stars that laugh from the sky,
And mock at my pain as they pass me by.

Bend low, pale Moon! Her face is like thine—
Like thine from afar I can see it shine,
Now hid in a cloud, in a halo now —
She is thy kindred; and fickle art thou.

IN VENICE ONCE.

IN Venice once they lived and loved —
Fair women with their red-gold hair —
Their twinkling feet to music moved,
In Venice where they lived and loved,
And all Philosophy disproved,
While hope was young and life was fair,
In Venice where they lived and loved.

MY QUEEN OF MAY.

THE laughing garlanded May-time is here;
The glad laburnum whispers at the gate:
"She comes! She comes! I hear her step draw near,
My Queen of Beauty, Arbitress of Fate!"

The lilacs look at her — "She is more fair
Than the white moon, more proud than the strong sun;
Let him who seeks her royal grace beware,
To be unworthy were to be undone."

One wild sweet rose, that dreams the May is June,
Blooms for her; and for her a mateless bird
Thrills the soft dusk with his entrancing tune,
Content if by her only he is heard.

A curious star climbs the far heaven to see
What She it is for whom the waiting night,
To music set, trembles in melody;
Then, by her beauty dazzled, flees from sight.

And I — what am I that my voice should reach
The gracious ear to which it would aspire?
She will not heed my faltering poor speech;
I have no spell to win what all desire.

Yet will I serve my stately Queen of May;
Yet will I hope, till Hope itself be spent.
Better to strive, though steep and long the way,
Than on some weaker heart to sink content.

WHERE THE NIGHT'S PALE ROSES BLOW.

AH, the place is wild and sweet
Where my darling went: —
If I chase her flying feet
When the day is spent,
Shall I find her, as I go
Where the Night's pale roses blow?

AND YET.

LET me forget! Why should I seek to hold
Thine image in the mirror of my mind?
For him who can no way to please thee find
To house such tenant were indeed too bold —
Let me forget!

Do I not know the magic of that smile;
The way that wayward color comes and goes,
Fair Lady of the Lily and the Rose,
What time the souls of men thou would'st beguile:
Do I not know?

Thou shalt not reign, proud Queen, in this poor heart;
No rash oath of allegiance will I swear —
Though thou art beautiful beyond compare,
Thine art is nature, and thy nature art —
Thou shalt not reign!

And yet, and yet — how can I close my door?
It may be thou art weary and acold: —
Come in! Come in! To welcome thee is bold;
But work thy will — I am thy slave once more —
And yet! And yet!

I HEARD A CRY IN THE NIGHT.

I HEARD a cry in the night,
And swift I stole from my bed,
To find her, my heart's delight,
Once more in the lonesome night,
As before they called her dead.

I pulled the curtains away,
I bent my lips to her cheek:
She had fled from the glare of day,
Afar on her lonesome way;
Night came, and I heard her speak.

Again I harked to the call
Of the one little voice so dear;
No matter what might befall,
I had found her, my darling, my all,
And I held her warm and near.

I laid me down by her side:
I cooed like a mother dove.
Ah, was it her lips that replied,
Or only the wind that sighed,
And not my dainty, my love?

For cruel the morning came,
And mocking the blue sky smiled,
And the sun arose like a flame,
And vainly I called her name,
And I wept in vain for my child.

THE NAME ON A DOOR.

IT is only the name on a door —
Why should there be tears in my eyes?
But I never shall knock there more;
And sorrow is not overwise.

I used to go up the stair
When the day was wearing late,
And come on her unaware
As she sat and dreamed by the grate.

And then, like a sudden flame,
My welcome flashed from her eyes,
And her lips grew warm with my name,
And we saw Love's star arise.

Sometimes I but held her hand,
And never a word said we —
We could always understand
With never a word, you see.

Sometimes she chattered like mad,
And laughed — I can hear her now.
Shall I ever again be glad?
I think I 've forgotten how.

It is only the name on a door,
  Where I used to come and go;
But never to knock there more —
  Why, the world seems dead, you know!

VAIN WAITING.

THE western sky has begun to darken,
The sun has set, and the wind is low;
And waiting alone I sit and hearken
As I used to hearken, ages ago,

For a voice that now the winds know only —
The winds, and the stars, and the vacant night —
A presence that vanished and left me lonely,
Reft of all that was heart's delight.

I wait and listen — no step draws nigh me;
Full your world is — empty is mine;
Only the mocking wind sweeps by me,
And flings me never a word or a sign.

A WISH.

I WISH thee length of days
Filled full of all that's best —
Long years to earn thy bays,
Then twilight time for rest.

I wish thee love and joy —
Love that is strong and sweet —
Gladness without alloy;
A heart with thine to beat.

And then, when Earth has given
Her best and most to thee,
At last I wish thee Heaven —
Then come again to me!

THE COSTLIEST GIFT.

I GIVE you a day of my life —
Treasure no gold could buy —
For peasant and peer are at one
When the time comes to die;
And all that the monarch has,
His koh-i-noor or his crown,
He would give for one more day
Ere he lay his dear life down.

They are winged, like the viewless wind —
These days that come and go —
And we count them, and think of the end,
But the end we cannot know:
The whole world darkens with pain
When a sunset fades in the west —
. . . I give you a day of my life,
My uttermost gift and my best.

TO HER WHO KNOWS.

BECAUSE your eyes are blue, your lips are red,
And the soft hair is golden on your head,
And your sweet smiling can make glad the day,
And on your cheeks pink roses have their way,
Should I adore you?

Since other maids have shining golden hair,
And other cheeks the June's pink roses wear,
And other eyes can set the day alight,
And other lips can smile with youth's delight,
Why bow before you?

But if the eyes are blue for me alone,
And if for only me the rose has blown,
And but for me the lips their sweet smile wear,
Then shall you mesh me in your golden hair —
I will adore you.

And as my saint, my soul's one shining star,
That lights my darkness from its throne afar,
As lights the summer moon the waiting sea,
With all I am, and all I strive to be,
I 'll bow before you.

IN THE OFFING.

A GHOSTLY ship sails on a ghostly sea,
And bears afar an anxious company,
Whose dreams, whose hopes, whose constant longings yearn
For some fair port from which no ships return —
Some quiet haven, undisturbed by strife
Of vexing surges from our storm-vext life —
Wind-driven surges from our wind-swept life.

My longing heart sails with them as they go,
Anxious as they, and heavy with their woe;
Where is the peaceful shore we long to find —
The waves are stormy, and the path is blind —
The distant sky shuts in the distant sea —
What star of promise holds the dark for me?
What star of promise holds the dark for thee?

WITH A BOOK.

YOU fain would know the story of my life?
Nay, then you shall divine it from my song —
The weariness of ever-baffled strife;
The Joy that fled, the Grief that lingers long;

The barren shore, laved by the bitter tide;
The vanity of all beneath the sun;
The longing, that Fate's mockery denied;
The triumph unachieved; the goal unwon;

The fleeting moments, vague and sweet and dear
As violets upon a grave that grow: —
Is not the whole vain story written here?
Then turn these leaves, and you my soul shall know.

Sonnets.

A Sonnet is a moment's monument —
Memorial from the Soul's Eternity
To one dead, deathless hour.

D. G. Rossetti.

Love's Rosary.

To unpathed waters, undreamed shores.

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

LAND OF MY DREAMS.

O SPACIOUS, splendid Land that no man knows,
Whose mystery as the tideless sea is deep,
Whose beauty haunts me in the courts of sleep!
What whispering wind from thy hid garden blows,
Sweet with the breath of Love's celestial rose?
What field hast thou that mortal may not reap?
What soft enchantment do those meadows keep
Through which Life's bright, unfathomed river flows?

I can resist thy charm when noon is high;
Mine ears are deafened while earth's clamors rave;
But now the sun has set, the winds are low,
And Night with her proud company draws nigh,
Thy spell prevails, thy mystic joys I crave —
Land of my Dreams, I will arise and go.

II.

THOUGH WE WERE DUST.

IN the vast realms of unconjectured space,
Where devious paths eternally outspread,
Where farthest stars their mighty marches tread,
And unknown suns through unknown systems pace,
What power can give our longing hearts the grace
To follow feet that long ago have fled,
Among the thronging populace of the dead
To find the welcome of the one dear face?

Nay! Let the souls throng round us! I am I,
And you are you! We should not vainly seek:
Would you not hear, though faint and far my call?
Nay, were we dust, and had no lips to speak,
Our very atoms on the winds blown by
Would meet, and cling, whatever might befall.

III.

THE ROSE OF DAWN.

HOW mockingly the morning dawns for me,
Since thou art gone where no pursuing speech,
No prayer, no farthest-sounding cry can reach!
I call, and wait the answer to my plea —
But only hear the stern, dividing sea,
That pauses not, however I beseech,
Breaking, and breaking, on the distant beach
Of that far land whereto thy soul did flee.

Do happy suns shine on thee where thou art?
And kind stars cheer with friendly ray thy night?
And strange birds wake with music strange thy morn?
This beggared world, where thou no more hast part,
Misapprehends the morning's young delight,
And the old grief makes the new day forlorn.

IV.

THOU REIGNEST STILL.

THOU liv'st and reignest in my memory,
Discrowned of earth, but crowned still in the soul
Subject to thee from pole to utmost pole: —
This is the kingdom thou hast still in fee,
Though Silence and the Night have hidden thee —
King, crowned in joy, and crowned again in dole,
Sovereign and master of my being's whole,
My heart, and life, and all there is of me.

It is thy breath I breathe upon the air;
Thou shinest on me with the stars of night;
Thou risest for me with the morning sun;
I enter Dreamland's Court and find thee there,
And finding quiver with the old delight,
When life and love and hope had just begun.

V.

TIME'S PRISONER.

TIME was, beloved, when from this far-off place
My words could reach thee, and thine own reply —
Now thou art gone, and my heart's longing cry
Pursues thee, as some runner runs his race —
Cleaves like a bird the emptiness of space,
And falls back, baffled, from the pitiless sky.
Ah, why with thee, so dear, did I not die?
Why should I live benighted of thy face?

Thou wilt have sped so far before I come —
How shall I ever win to where thou art?
Or, if I find thee, shall I not be dumb —
With voiceless longing break my silent heart?
Nay! Surely thou wilt read mine eyes, and know
That for thy sake all heaven I would forego.

VI.

"HAVE I NOT LEARNED TO LIVE WITHOUT THEE YET?"

HAVE I not learned to live without thee yet? —
Years joined to scornful years have mocked my pain;
Light-footed joys have proffered transient gain,
And smiled on me, and wooed me to forget;
And lesser loves my pathway have beset
With cheap enticements. Since my heart was fain,
Sometimes I listened, but their boast was vain, —
They had no coin to pay the old time's debt.

And thou? Thou art at rest, and far away
From all the vain delusions of the hour;
Like some forsaken child, I weep by night,
While thou rejoicest in thy perfect day:
Thine is the triumph, thine the immortal power, —
Art thou too glad to mourn for earth's delight?

VII.

A HEAVENLY BIRTHDAY.

DOST thou take note and say, in thy far place,
"This birthday is the first since that dark hour
When on my breast was laid Love's funeral flower?"
Thou hast won all, in the immortal race —
Conquerer of life and death and time and space —
And I, a lagging, beaten runner, cower,
While round me mocking memories jeer and lower,
And from thy far world comes no helpful grace.

Thou dost not whisper that those heights are cold
Where I walk not beside thee, and the night
Of death is long. Nay, I am over-bold!
Thou sittest comforted and healed with light,
And young and glad; and I who wait am old;
Yet shall I find thee, even in Death's despite.

VIII.

LETHE.

What shall assuage the unforgotten pain,
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
D. G. ROSSETTI.

I TIRE of phantoms that my heart distrain,
That claim their own, and will not let me rest,
That mock me with old laughter, long-hushed jest,
And of the love I promised once are fain.
Shall I not seek some opiate for pain,
And drug the ceaseless ache within my breast —
Bid Memory "Hence!" as an unwelcome guest,
And smite the joyous chords of Life again?

Nay! Then must I forbid the dead to speak,
And do the holy past unholy wrong —
Disown its claim — refuse to pay its debt —
All Heaven would look with scorn on one so weak!
I choose, instead, to suffer and be strong —
Give me no Lethe! I will not forget.

IX.

A SILENT VOICE.

THEY bid me welcome in the proud New Year,
Crowned with delight, his Minister the Sun —
Monarch, whose sumptuous reign has just begun :
Nay, I am deaf — their shouts I do not hear —
I miss a voice that long ago was dear ;
A tender voice, whose lightest call had won
My ear, my heart, my life, till life were done : —
That voice is silent — theirs I will not hear.

A little bird that finds the winter cold
Comes out, and looks at me, and sings of him
Who made the vanished summers warm ; and, bold
With sorrow, calls the New Year's splendor dim.
Nay, bird, he is gone far who used to sing ;
And days, and months, and years no message bring.

X.

WERE BUT MY SPIRIT LOOSED UPON THE AIR.

WERE but my spirit loosed upon the air —
By some High Power who could Life's chains unbind,
Set free to seek what most it longs to find —
To no proud Court of Kings would I repair:
I would but climb, once more, a narrow stair,
When day was wearing late, and dusk was kind;
And one should greet me to my failings blind,
Content so I but shared his twilight there.

Nay! well I know he waits not as of old —
I could not find him in the old-time place —
I must pursue him, made by sorrow bold,
Through worlds unknown, in strange celestial race,
Whose mystic round no traveller has told,
From star to star, until I see his face.

Of Life and Love.

The Accumulated Past.

D. G. Rossetti.

AT MIDSUMMER.

THE spacious Noon enfolds me with its peace —
The affluent Midsummer wraps me round —
So still the earth and air, that scarce a sound
Affronts the silence, and the swift caprice
Of one stray bird's lone call does but increase
The sense of some compelling hush profound,
Some spell by which the whole vast world is bound,
Till star-crowned Night smile downward its release.

I sit and dream — midway of the long day —
Midway of the glad year — midway of life —
My whole world seems, indeed, to hold its breath : —
For me the sun stands still upon his way —
The winds for one glad hour remit their strife —
Then Day, and Year, and Life whirl on toward Death.

THE LIFE-MASK OF KEATS.[1]

POET to poet gave this mask, of him
Who sang the song of Rapture and Despair;
Who to the Nightingale was kin; aware
Of all the Night's enamouring — the dim
Strange ecstasy of light at the moon's rim;
The unheard melodies that subtly snare
The listening soul — Pan's wayward pipes that dare
To conjure shapes now beautiful, now grim.

He who this life-mask prized so tenderly
Might not behold the semblance that it wore,
The charm ineffable — now sweet, now sad:
But well he knew what loveliness must be
Upon the face of Keats for evermore,
And with his spirit's gaze saw and was glad.

[1] Given to the blind poet, Philip Bourke Marston, by Richard Watson Gilder.

SOUL TO BODY.

OH, long-time Friend, 't is many a year since we
Took hands together, and came through the morn,
When thou and day and I were newly born —
And fair the future looked, and glad and free —
A year as long as whole Eternity —
And full of roses with no stinging thorn,
And full of joys that could not be outworn;
And time was measureless for thee and me.

Long have we fared together, thou and I:
Thou hast grown dearer, as old friends must grow:
Small wonder if I dread to say good-by
When our long pact is over, and I go
To enter strange, new worlds beyond the sky,
Called by that Power to whom no man saith No.

AT REST.

SHALL I lie down to sleep, and see no more
The splendid pageantry of earth and sky —
The proud procession of the stars sweep by;
The white moon sway the sea, and woo the shore;
The morning lark to the far Heaven soar;
The nightingale with the soft dusk draw nigh;
The summer roses bud, and bloom, and die —
Will Life and Life's delight for me be o'er?

Nay! I shall be, in my low silent home,
Of all Earth's gracious ministries aware —
Glad with the gladness of the risen day,
Or gently sad with sadness of the gloam,
Yet done with striving, and foreclosed of care —
At rest — at rest! What better thing to say?

SHALL I COMPLAIN?

SHALL I complain because the feast is o'er,
And all the banquet lights have ceased to shine?
For joy that was, and is no longer mine;
For love that came and went, and comes no more;
For hopes and dreams that left my open door;
Shall I, who hold the past in fee, repine? . . .
Nay! there are those who never quaffed life's wine —
That were the unblest fate one might deplore.

To sit alone and dream, at set of sun,
When all the world is vague with coming night —
To hear old voices whisper, sweet and low,
And see dear faces steal back, one by one,
And thrill anew to each long-past delight —
Shall I complain, who still this bliss may know?

PARTING.

'TIS you, not I, have chosen. Love, go free!
No cry of mine shall hold you on your way.
I wept above the dead Past yesterday: —
Let it lie now where all fair dead things be,
Beneath the waves of Time's all-whelming sea.
Forget it or remember — come what may —
The time is past when one could bid it stay:
What boots it any more to you or me?

It was my life — what matter? — I am dead,
And if I seem to move, or speak, or smile,
If some strange round of being still I tread
And am not buried, for a little while,
Yet, look you, Love, I am not what I seem:
I died when died my faith in that dear dream.

VAIN FREEDOM.

SO I am free whom Love held thrall so long!
Now will I flaunt my colors on the air,
And with triumphal music scale heaven's stair,
Till all those shining choirs shall hush their song,
And hark in silent wonder to the strong,
Compelling harmonies that boldly dare
To soar so high, and make the blest aware
That, free like them, I stand their ranks among.

Nay! but my triumph mocks me, — chills the day:
Bound would I be, and suffer, and be sad,
Rather than free, and with no heart to ache.
Strong God of Love, still hold me in thy sway!
Give back my human pain; let me go mad
With the old dreams, old tortures, for Love's sake.

THE NEW YEAR DAWNS.

THE New Year dawns — the sun shines strong and clear;
And all the world rejoices and is gay;
The city-loving birds from spray to spray
Flit busily and twitter in my ear
Their little frozen note of wintry cheer:
From ruddy children with the snow at play
Ring peals of laughter gladder than in May,
While friend greets friend, with "Happy be thy Year!"

So would I joy, if Thou wert by my side —
So would I laugh, if Thou couldst laugh with me —
But, left alone, in Darkness I abide,
Mocked by a Day that shines no more on thee:
From this too merry world my heart I hide —
My New Year dawns not till thy face I see.

ASPIRATION.

BREAK, ties that bind me to this world of sense,
Break, now, and loose me on the upper air : —
Those skies are blue ; and that far dome is fair
With prophecy of some divine, intense,
Undreamed-of rapture. Ah, from thence
I catch a music that my soul would snare
With its strange sweetness ; and I seem aware
Of Life that waits to crown this life's suspense.

I see — I hear — yet to this world I cling —
This fatal world of passion and unrest —
Where loss and pain jeer at each human bliss,
As autumn mocks the fleetness of the spring,
And each morn sees its sunset in the west —
Break, ties that bind me to a world like this !

OH, TRAVELLER BY UNACCUSTOMED WAYS.

OH, traveller by unaccustomed ways —
Searcher among new worlds for pleasures new —
Art thou content because the skies are blue,
And blithe birds thrill the air with roundelays,
And the fair fields with sunshine are ablaze?
Dost thou not find thy heart's-ease twined with rue,
And long for some dear bloom on earth that grew —
Some wild, sweet fragrance of remembered days?

I send my message to thee by the stars —
Since other messenger I may not find
Till I go forth beyond these prisoning bars,
Leaving this memory-haunted world behind,
To seek thee, claim thee, wheresoe'er thou be,
Since Heaven itself were empty, lacking thee.

GREAT LOVE.

I.

GREAT LOVE IS HUMBLE.

HUMBLE is Love, for he is Honor's child:
He knows the worth of her he does adore,
And that high reckoning humbles him the more:
By her dear sweetness from his pain beguiled,
He would be proud because her look is mild;
But all the while he scans the oft-told score,
And his imperfectness must still deplore,
Abashed no less because on him she smiled.

To be allowed to love is Love's dear prize:
To lay his homage at Her royal feet —
To enter thus the true heart's paradise,
The name of names forever to repeat,
And read his sentence in her answering eyes —
Love should be humble — his reward is meet.

II.

GREAT LOVE IS PROUD.

For very humbleness Great Love is proud:
  The round world were a tribute thrice too small
  To render to the rightful queen of all —
Yet why should Love's least gift be disavowed —
If once her royal head the queen has bowed,
  Lending her gracious ear to the low call
  Of him whose glory is to be her thrall —
Who only prays his worship be allowed?

Once to have known her fairness — who is fair
  Beyond the dreamer's dream, the painter's art —
This, only this, were bliss above compare:
  But if he find the gateway to her heart,
  Shall he not, like a king, be set apart
Who for one royal moment entered there?

HER YEARS.

YEARS come and go, each bringing in his train,
Spring fair with promise, Summer glad with bloom,
Fruit-bearing Autumn, and the Winter's gloom;
But years and seasons march for Her in vain,
Since still she strings her rosary of pain,
Catching from far some subtle, lost perfume,
Some scent of roses dying on a tomb,
Unfreshened by Spring's dew or Summer's rain.

Why change the seasons when She cannot change?
For pomp of morn, high noon, or setting sun
What cares she? They are powerless to estrange
Her soul from Grief, who, till her day is done,
Companions her wherever she may range,
And makes her New Years old, ere yet begun.

MIDWINTER FLOWERS.

TO E. C. S.

I HOLD you to my lips and heart, fair flowers,
Dear, first-begotten children of the sun —
Whose summer lives in winter were begun;
Sweet aliens from the warm June's pleasant bowers,
Mocked at by cruel winds in desolate hours
Through which the sands of winter slowly run:
I touch your tender petals, one by one,
And miss no beauty born of summer showers.

I have a friend who to Life's winter days
Will bring the warmth and splendor of the June;
From him ye come, yet need not speak his praise,
Since on my heart is written well that rune,
And the fine fragrance of his gentle deeds
Reveals his presence 'mong earth's common weeds.

HER PRESENCE.

I LONG in vain by day, but when the night
With all its jewels stars the waiting sky,
And vagrant fireflies like stray souls flit by,
She seeks me in the tender waning light,
And sits beside me there, a Presence white; —
Her eyes yearn for me, and her dear lips sigh,
But if to clasp her cold soft hands I try
The shadows deepen, and she fades from sight.

O lost and dear! — by what strange, devious way
Does she escape? for I, too, fain would flee
From all the hollow pageantry of life,
And with her through immortal meadows stray.
The free winds mock my quest, stars laugh to see,
And I wait helpless till Death end the strife.

WHEN WE CONFRONT THE VASTNESS OF THE NIGHT.

WHEN we confront the Vastness of the Night,
And meet the gaze of her eternal eyes,
How trivial seem the garnered gains we prize —
The laurel wreath we flaunt to envious sight;
The flower of Love we pluck for our delight;
The mad, sweet music of the heart, that cries
An instant on the listening air, then dies —
How short the day of all things dear and bright!

The Everlasting mocks our transient strife;
The pageant of the Universe whirls by
This little sphere with petty turmoil rife —
Swift as a dream and fleeting as a sigh —
This brief delusion that we call our life,
Where all we can accomplish is to die.

ON MEETING A SAILING VESSEL IN MID-OCEAN.

SHE moves on grandly 'twixt the sea and sky,
Like some gigantic bird from foreign shore;
Gray mist behind her and gray mist before,
Riding upon the waters royally.
Salt winds caress her, as they urge her by,
And we who watch shall see her nevermore;
For on she goes, to where the breakers roar
Round some far coast we never may descry.

So on Life's tide we meet an unknown soul,
And catch a passing vision of its grace;
Just seen, then vanished, leaving us to yearn
With vain desire to follow to its goal
The revelation of the radiant face —
Then heartsick to our solitude we turn.

MIDNIGHT AT SEA.

THROUGH the deep stillness of the awful night,
I heard the clamor of the ship's great bell —
A voice cried: "Twelve o'clock, and all is well!"
Then silence, and the solemn, watching light
Of the white moon, on billows wild and white
That yielded, to her magical, dear spell,
The stormy hearts no lesser charm could quell —
Slaves of her lamp, and powerless to affright.

Ah, when across the wide, unfathomed sea
Which no chart maps, whose depth no plummet knows,
To some dim, unconjectured shore we steer,
Through that wild night, into whose depths we flee
Farther than any wind from this world blows,
May cry of "All is well" our midnight cheer!

INTER MANES.

IN the dim watches of the midmost night,
A ghost confronts him, standing by his bed,
A lonesome ghost who walks uncomforted,
Pale child of Memory and dead Delight,
No longer fair or pleasant in his sight.
With dusky hair upon her shoulders shed,
And cypress leaves for garland on her head,
As patient as the moonlight and as white,
She stands beside him, and puts forth her hand
To lead him backward into Love's lost Land —
Sad Land which shadows people, and where wait
Memory, her sire, and dead Delight, his mate —
And standing there among the shadowy band,
He learns how Love mocks him who loves too late.

YET, STRANGELY BEAUTIFUL YOUR FACE I FIND.

YET, strangely beautiful your face I find;
Your voice is like the murmur that decrees
A morn of April, and awakes the trees
To meet the soft caresses of the wind.
Like sudden light your presence makes us blind;
From your compelling spell the weak man flees,
The strong man sues you on his bended knees;
And with your golden hair their chains you bind.

I am not of them. Not to you I kneel.
Cold is your charm — like the white moon your soul;
For something more akin to me I yearn.
You can enthrall; but, Empress, can you feel?
March on, unchallenged, to your far-off goal;
From you to some more human heart I turn.

A SUMMER'S DREAM.

I.

WHAT that dead summer was my heart knows well —
Knows all it held — sad joy, and joyous pain —
For pain or joy it cannot come again,
With bitter sweetness we alone could tell: —
Time, when I only thought to say farewell,
To break the links of Love's long-during chain —
That I the stars should pass, and you remain,
Held fast to earth by some malignant spell.

Procession of long days, and longer nights —
When suns rose mocking, and the moon was cold —
When Hope and I lay dying, as I thought,
Still could I bless Love's vanishing delights,
And reach pale hands to clasp him as of old,
Though each dread hour with Death's dismay was fraught.

II.

So Summer, with her slow, reluctant feet,
Went by, and lingering smiled, as loth to part,
While fond delusions warmed my lonesome heart: —
Though lives were severed, wingèd dreams could meet;
So met we, dear, as bodiless spirits greet —
Met, and were blind, foreseeing not the smart
Of hopes that hope not, and of tears that start
From eyes that say what lips may not repeat.

One brief day here, then gone beyond the sun —
How short the way, how soon the goal is won —
So less or more of love why need we measure?
But Fate avenges pleasant things begun,
And Retribution spares not any one,
And no Gods pity those who steal their treasure.

MY MASTERS.

THE first of all my masters was Delight —
I bent my knee to worship him, and sought
His ministers, and all the bliss they wrought,
In Day's large splendor, and the peace of Night,
In song, and mirth, and every goodly sight;
Until fair Love another lesson taught,
And bitter pain dearer than pleasure brought,
And my whole soul was subject to his might.

Brief while I strove for Fame — his laurel wreath
Seemed good to wear, and dear the fleeting breath
With which men praise the idol of an hour;
But one drew nigh me clothed upon with power,
And looking in the awful eyes of Death
I knew the Master at whose touch we cower.

TO PRINCE ORIC.

(SIX YEARS OLD.)

DO you remember, centuries gone by,
When you were king, and I, your subject, came
To kiss your hand, and swell the loud acclaim
Wherewith the people greeted you, and cry —
"Long life, and love, and glory, O most high
And puissant lord"? The city was aflame
With torches; banners streamed; and knight and dame
Knelt at your feet — you smiled your proud reply.

I think you do remember; for I caught
That same elusive smile upon your lips,
When ended was the centuries' eclipse,
And I, my sovereign found, my homage brought:
"Long life, and love, and glory, now as then!"
And you? — your smile is my reward again.

A POET'S SECOND LOVE.

I.

I SHARE your heart with her, its former Queen,
Who taught your lips the song of love to sing —
To whose high altar you were wont to bring
Such laurels as no Fair since Time hath been
Has decked her brow with. Joy was there and teen,
And reverence, as for some most sacred thing
Set high in Heaven for all men's worshipping;
Such laurels gathers no man twice, I ween.

Your second love, ungarlanded, uncrowned —
Fit for life's daily uses, let us say —
Whose lips have never thrilled you with sweet sound,
Hears from the grave your first love's voice, to-day.
With scornful laughter mock her hope to fill
The heart ruled by its earliest sovereign still.

II.

Not mine the spell to charm your lute to song;
A poet you, yet not for me your lays;
You crowned that other woman with your praise,
Lifting your voice to Heaven, triumphant, strong,
And later rhymes might do her laurels wrong;
Should you and I together tread life's ways,
An echo would pursue us from old days,
And men would say — "He loved once, well and long,
So now without great love he is content,
Since she is dead whose praise he used to sing,
And daily needs demand their aliment." . . .
Thus some poor bird, who strives with broken wing
To soar, might stoop — strength gone and glad life spent —
To any hand that his scant food would bring.

FAIR LIFE.

FAIR Life, thou dear companion of my days —
Life with the rose-red lips and shining eyes —
That led'st me through my Youth's glad Paradise,
And stand'st beside me still, in these dull ways
My older feet must tread, the tangled maze
Where cares beset me and fresh foes surprise;
On the keen wind and from the far-off skies
Is borne a whisper, which my heart dismays,
That thou and I must part. Beloved so long,
Wilt thou not stay with me, inconstant Love?
Nay, then, the cry upon the wind grows strong —
I must without thee fresh adventure prove;
And yet it may be I but do thee wrong,
And I shall find thee waiting where I rove.

A PLEA FOR THE OLD YEAR.

I SEE the smiling New Year climb the heights —
The clouds, his heralds, turn the sky to rose,
And flush the whiteness of the winter snows
Till Earth is glad with Life and Life's delight.
The weary Old Year died when died the night,
And this new comer, proud with triumph, shows
His radiant face, and each glad subject knows
The welcome Monarch, born to rule aright.

Yet there are graves far-off that no man tends,
Where lie the vanished loves and hopes and fears,
The dreams that grew to be our hearts' best friends,
The smiles, and, dearer than the smiles, the tears —
These were that Old Year's gifts, whom none defends,
Now his strong Conqueror, the New, appears.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead and buried underground,
And your dear eyes still greet the shining day,
Will you remember — "Thus she used to say —
And thus, and thus, her low voice used to sound"?
Will memory wander like a ghost around
The well-known paths — tread the accustomed way;
Or will you pluck fresh blossoms of the May,
And waste no rose upon my burial mound?

I would not have your life to sorrow wed —
Your joyous youth grief-stricken for my sake; —
Though black-winged Care her home with you should make,
Yet vain would be the scalding tears you shed;
And though your heart for love of me should break,
How could I hear, or heed, if I were dead?

ONE AFTERNOON.

TO LOUISA, LADY ASHBURTON.

FROM the dear stillness of your pines you came —
That vast Cathedral where the winds are choir,
And bear to the far heavens the soul's desire,
While the great sun burns golden, like the flame,
On some high altar, to the Highest Name —
From that dear shrine whence worldly thoughts retire —
Where hearts are hushed, and souls to Heaven aspire,
You came, as one who would God's peace proclaim.

Now sunset broods upon these solemn hills —
The day is done, and the deep night draws nigh,
And soon the waiting stars will light the sky: —
Though You and Day have gone, your presence fills
The place, and the glad air around me thrills
As if some Heaven-sent angel had passed by.

In Quest of Light.

Darkness surrounds us.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Once in a dream I saw the flowers
That bud and bloom in Paradise.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

AFAR FROM GOD.

FAIN would I scale the heights that lead to God,
But my feet stumble and my steps are weak,
Warm are the valleys, and the hills are bleak:
Here, where I linger, flowers make soft the sod,
But those far paths that martyr feet have trod
Are sharp with flints, and from their farthest peak
The still, small voice but faintly seems to speak,
While here the drowsy lilies dream and nod.

I have dreamed with them, till the night draws nigh
In which I cannot climb: still high above,
In the blue vastness of the awful sky,
Those unscaled heights my fatal weakness prove —
Those shining heights which I must reach, or die
Afar from God, unquickened by His love.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

WHEN shall I join the blessed company
Of those this barren world to me denies?
When shall I wake to the new day's surprise,
Beyond the murmur of death's moaning sea,
In that glad home where my best loved ones be;
And know that I have found my Paradise,
Finding again the love that never dies
The heart's dear welcome, biding there for me?

I wait alone upon life's wind-swept beach —
The waves are high — the sea is wild and wide —
Yet Death, bold pilot, all their wrath shall dare,
And guide me to the shore I fain would reach: —
Even now I hear the swift, incoming tide,
Whose slow, eternal ebb my bark shall bear.

NEWLY BORN.

OUT of the dark into the arms of love
The babe is born, and recks not of the way
His soul has traversed to confront the day:
Enough for him the face that smiles above,
The tireless feet that on his errands move,
The arms that clasp, the tender lips that kiss,
The whole dear wealth of welcome and of bliss
His heirship and his sovereignty that prove.

So may there be no place for Earth's vain tears
When Heaven's great rapture bursts upon the sight: —
Shall not the soul, new-born in heavenly spheres,
Forget the paths it traversed, and the night
It journeyed through, and all old hopes and fears,
Caught up into that Infinite, Great Light?

THE SONG OF THE STARS.

IN those high heavens wherein the fair stars flower,
They do God's praises sound from night till morn,
And till the smiling day is newly born
Chant each to each His glory and His power;
Then, silent, wait, through Day's brief triumph-hour,
Watching till Night shall come again, with scorn
Of those chameleon splendors that adorn
Day's death, and then before his victor cower.

Forever, to immortal ears, they sing,—
These shining stars that praise their Maker's grace—
And from far world to world their anthems ring:
They shine and sing because they see His face
We, cowards, dread the vision Death shall bring,
The waking rapture, and the fair, far place.

A QUESTION: AT SEA.

HOW dark the clouds that hide the sky from sight,
While winds like human souls moan round our keel,
Their woe inexplicable to reveal —
With lone, unsilenced cries for lost delight,
That suns by day, or journeying moons by night
Can find no more, till the vast heavens reel
And the strong worlds are rent by that last peal,
The trumpet-blast that puts old Time to flight.

Then, when the End has come, and Chaos reigns,
And darkness mocks past glories of the sun,
Will human hearts forget their human pains
In some unearthly blessedness, new-won?
Shall *we* outlast this brief earth's transient gains,
And know ourselves the one thing not undone?

THE LAND OF GOLD.

BEHIND the sunset's bars in the wide West,
We catch the radiance of the Land of Gold;
The dazzling splendors of its wealth untold
Flash through our dreams, and wake to vague unrest
The soul — with Life's dull weariness oppprest,
Or wrapped in weeds of sorrow, fold on fold —
Till, with sheer longing and despair grown bold,
We turn to seek that Land where all are blest.

But the Gold fades, and the strong stars arise
That look beyond the sunset and the sun;
They see our little world swing far below,
While over it imperial planets glow —
From Heaven they whisper, "Heaven cannot be won
Until great Death has come to make men wise."

A PRAYER IN THE DARK.

I STRETCH my hand out through the lonesome night,
My helpless hand, and pray Thee, Lord, to lead
My ignorant steps, and help me at my need:
Far off from home, pity my hapless plight,
And through the darkness guide me on to light!
I have no hope unless my cry Thou heed, —
Be merciful; for I am lost, indeed,
Unless thy rising sun the darkness smite.

How shall I find, who know not how to seek?
Kindle my soul, enlighten my dull mind;
My heart is heavy, and my faith is weak, —
A stone am I, and deaf and dumb and blind, —
Unhelped of Thee my footsteps helpless stray, —
Have pity, Thou, and lead me to the Day!

At Death's Postern.

The dead but sceptered sovereigns who still rule.

BYRON.

The ways of Death are soothing and serene —
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

W. E. HENLEY

ACROSS THE SEA.

INTO the silence of the silent night
He passed, whom all men honor; and the sun
Arose to shine upon a world undone,
And barren lives, bereft of Life's delight.
The morning air was chill with sudden blight,
And Winter's cruel triumph had begun;
But He to some far Summer shore had won,
Whose splendor hides him from our dazzled sight.

Not England's pride alone, this Lord of Song!
We — heirs to Shakespeare's and to Milton's speech —
Claim heritage from Tennyson's proud years:
To us his spacious, splendid lines belong —
We, too, repeat his praises, each to each —
We share his glory, and we share your tears.

October, 1892.

ROBERT BROWNING.

I.

HIS STAR.

THE Century was young — the month was May —
The spacious East was kindled with a light
That lent a sudden glory to the night,
And a new star began its upward way
Toward the high splendor of the perfect day:
With pure white flame, inexorably bright,
It reached the souls of men — no stain so slight
As to escape its all-revealing ray.

When countless voices cried, "The Star has set!"
And through the lands there surged a sea of pain,
Was it Death's triumph — victory of Woe? —
Nay! There are lights the sky may not forget:
When suns, and moons, and souls shall rise again,
In the New Life's wide East that star shall glow.

ROBERT BROWNING.

II.

THE POET OF HUMAN LIFE.

SILENCE and Night sequestered thee in vain!
Oblivion's threats thou proudly couldst defy.
Thou art not dead — such great souls do not die:
One small world's range no longer could constrain
That strong-winged spirit of its freedom fain:
New stars, new lives, thy fearless quest would try.
Our baffled vision may not soar so high —
We mourn, as loss, thine infinite, great gain.

Yet, keen of sight, to whom men's souls lay bare,
Stripped clean of shams, unclothed of all disguise,
Revealed to thee as if at each soul's birth
Thou hadst been nigh to stamp it foul or fair —
Why shouldst thou seek new schools to make thee wise
Who shared Heaven's secrets whilst thou walked on earth?

DECEMBER, 1890.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

AND can it be on the relentless blast
The Last Leaf has blown by — the tree is bare?
Strange was the chill that shivered on the air,
As if an unclothed soul were hurrying past,
In search of some new region strange and vast —
Some Country unexplored, where dead men fare,
Assuaged of Life, and all Life's carking care,
To the Great Rapture, waiting them at last.

He may be glad for whom the Heavens ope,
And the New Day shines royally and clear —
But we, who mourn him and shall mourn him long,
For what meet consolation shall we hope —
Or whither shall our sorrow turn for cheer,
Bereft of our dear Singer, and his song?

OCTOBER, 1894.

SUMMONED BY THE KING.[1]

HE was at home in Courts and knew the great,
Himself was of them. Ofttimes Kings have sent
To call him to their presence; and he went,
A welcome guest, to share their royal state,
For earth's high potentates a fitting mate.
He was of all men honored — crowned of Song,
And crowned of Love — and high above the wrong
Of envy, or the littleness of hate.

And now the mightiest King — to summon him
To that far place whereto all souls must come —
Has sent swift Azrael, Heaven's chamberlain, —
Beyond the ultimate sea's remotest rim,
Where all the voices of this earth are dumb,
The Courtier journeys — called to Court again.

[1] James Russell Lowell — August, 1891.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

AUTHOR OF "GARDEN SECRETS."

HE, who those secrets whispered — he is dead —
No more the rose and lily shall confide
To him how faithless was the Wind that sighed
With fleeting love, rifled their bloom and fled;
The "Garden Fairies," by Titania led,
Ring no more chimes of rapture since he died;
And from unseen "Wind Gardens," where abide
The souls of blossoms, no sweet breath is shed.

His flowers and he have vanished: yet, who knows
Through what fair fields unwitnessed of the sun
He wanders, among blossoms red and white,
Fostered of Joy — where never chill blast blows,
And the glad year is always just begun? —
Nor Time, nor Death, immortal youth can blight.

THE CLOSED GATE.

But life is short; so gently close the gate.
WINIFRED HOWELLS.

THUS wrote she when the heart in her was high,
And her brief tale of youth seemed just begun.
Like some white flower that shivers in the sun
She heard from far the low winds prophesy —
Blowing across the grave where she must lie —
Had strange prevision of the victory won
In the swift race that Life with Death should run,
And, hand in hand with Life, saw Death draw nigh.

Beyond this world the hostile surges foam:
Our eyes are dim with tears and cannot see
In what fair paths her feet our coming wait,
What stars rise for her in her far new home: —
We but conjecture all she yet may be,
While on the Joy she was, we close the gate.

A DREAM IN THE NIGHT.

TO MY MOTHER.

SOMETIMES it seems thy face — thy long-hid face —
Looks out on me as from a passing cloud,
Till I forget they clad thee in thy shroud,
And laid thee sleeping in thy far-off place —
So once again the tender, healing grace
Of thy dear presence is to me allowed.
Wilt thou not bless the head before thee bowed?
Wilt not thy voice thrill through the empty space?

How lone and cold the world without thee seemed!
Regaining thee, how warm it is and bright!
Yet all in vain to reach thee do I seek: —
And then I wake to know I have but dreamed,
And thou art silent as the silent night —
With tears I call thee, yet thou dost not speak.

Rondels and Rondeaux.

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Like echo of an old refrain
That long within the mind has lain.

CANON BELL.

VAGRANT LOVE.

O VAGRANT Love! do you come this way?
I hear you knock at the long-closed door
That turned too oft on its hinge before —
I am stronger now; I can say you Nay.

The vague, sweet smile on your lips to-day,
Its meaning and magic I know of yore:
O vagrant Love, do you come this way?
I hear your knock at the long-closed door.

But why your summons should I obey?
I listened once till my heart grew sore —
Shall I listen again, and again deplore?
Nay! Autumn must ever be wiser than May —
And the more we welcome the more you betray —
O vagrant Love, would you come this way?

THOUGH WE REPENT.

THOUGH we repent, can any God give back
The dear, lost days we might have made so fair —
Turn false to true, and carelessness to care
And let us find again what now we lack?

Oh, once, once more to tread the old-time track,
The flowers we threw away once more to wear —
Though we repent, can any God give back
The dear, lost days we might have made so fair?

Who can repulse a stealthy ghost's attack —
Silence a voice that doth the midnight dare —
Make fresh hopes spring from grave-sod of despair —
Set free a tortured soul from memory's rack?
Though we repent, can any God give back
The dear, lost days we might have made so fair?

THE SPRING IS HERE.

I FEEL the kindness of the lengthening days —
I warm me at the strong fire of the sun —
I know the year's glad course is well begun —
Ah, what awaits me in its devious ways?

What strange, new bliss shall thrill me with amaze?
What prize shall I rejoice that I have won?
I feel the kindness of the lengthening days —
I warm me at the strong fire of the sun.

Yet I behold the phantom that dismays —
The face of Grief that spares not any one —
Rewards come not until the task is done,
And there are minor chords in all earth's lays; —
Nay! Trust the kindness of the lengthening days —
I 'll warm me at the strong fires of the sun.

TO THE GHOST OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

FAIR, ruthless Ghost, I know you well!
High poets praised you with their lays,
Yet could not half your beauty tell;
So, now, your loveliness dismays

My rhyme, and mocks my poor essays
To hint, in words, its magic spell.
Ah, witching Queen, strange woes befell
The bards who served you in old days!

Sweet, ruthless Ghost, their songs of praise
Like warning music with me dwell,
And bid me to beware your plays
With love and death — your charm repel.
You smile again! that smile betrays
Hearts still are playthings: Fare you well.

AFTER SUPPING WITH A POET.

TO E. G.

YOU called your mystic draught Canary sack —
I drank, and dreamed of far-off Southern Seas,
And heard the wraiths of vagrant melodies;
And Joys and Hopes from some dim shade came back.

What blithe feet walked upon a grass-grown track!
What glad winds gossiped under summer trees!
You called your mystic draught Canary sack —
I drank, and dreamed of far-off Southern Seas.

This wine, from strange grapes pressed, upon my track
Lets loose the band of Ancient Memories:
Now this sole cup my waywardness can please;
All other brews some fine distinction lack —
You called your magic draught Canary sack!

ROSAMOND'S ROSE.

ROSAMOND gave me a rose,
Rose-red and alive in the sun:
Ah, what was its secret? Who knows? —
Her garden held only that one.

Now alive in my heart it glows;
By its magic my peace is undone —
There are spells that the wise should shun —
Rosamond gave me a rose.

But where is my old repose?
She calls — to her feet I run:
Oh, who shall the secret disclose?
Or how was my bondage begun? —
Rosamond gave me a rose,
Rose-red and alive in the sun.

TO A FAIR LADY.

FAIR Lady, you were clad in white
When first your gentle eyes I met,
And never shall my heart forget
The vision of that August night.

With the pale moon's transcendent light,
You shone, in your clear heaven set;
Fair Lady, you were clad in white
When first your gentle eyes I met.

Bend, Moon of Women, from your height,
Soothe with your smile earth's care and fret,
Let us be happy in your debt,
Since you Love's varied charms unite;
Your soul and you were clad in white
When first your gentle eyes I met.

TWO THRUSHES MET.

FOR M. E. S.

TWO thrushes met upon an April day,
And sang a simple song of love and glee:
. . . "And I am I, dear heart, and you are she
Whose tender note beguiled me on my way!"

They did not heed that all the sky was gray,
And not a neighbor leaf on any tree —
Two thrushes met upon an April day,
And sang a simple song of love and glee.

They did not miss the brightness of the May,
Or long the Summer's lavish wealth to see.
"April," he chirped, "is fair enough for me,
And when you sing, lo, Spring is on the way" —
Two thrushes met upon an April day,
And sang a simple song of love and glee.

LOVE MAKES THE SPRING.

HAS Spring come back? Is this the May
That makes the air so bland to-day?
The wild sweet winds are glad to know –
The waiting flowers begin to blow,
Green things are blithe along the way.

"What happy spell," I hear them say,
"Has turned the Winter into May?"
Each to the other — "Do you know?
Has Spring come back?"

Ah, Love is he who warms the day,
And turns the Winter into May —
And happy things begin to grow,
Alive with Love's glad overflow,
And answer to his ardent ray —
"Spring has come back."

LIFE'S DAY.

TO ONE WHO ASKS ME FOR A MERRY SONG.

OH, could I know how long Life's day —
How near its end, or far away —
What space for mirth, what room for tears —
Then might I put aside my fears,
And for a little while be gay.

But now, I think, Death soon may stray
Hereward, and find me at my play,
And mock my laughter with his jeers —
Ah, could I know!

And so I tremble 'neath the sway
Of that arch Foe, who at me peers,
And hour by hour my covert nears,
Yet mocks me when I bid him say
How long for me may be Life's day.

Quatrains.

Sudden and swift, and like a passing wind.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE LOST ROOM.

WHEN I came out of the fair House of Youth
I heedlessly behind me closed the door —
Now every hour is bitter with the truth
That I can find that portal never more.

AUTUMN DAYS.

AUTUMN days no solace bring —
Harvest time is vain —
Come again, O joy of spring —
Come Youth's April pain.

A DEAD POET.

SHE was the brightest thing beneath the sun —
Joy had of her his will —
And, now her singing life is spent and done,
The world seems strange and chill.

IN A LIBRARY.

THE living ofttimes vex us —
The wise old dead are best —
When Life's vain games perplex us
'T is here we turn for rest.

THE KING DETHRONED.

HE wore the purple a year and a day —
His pride was high, and his will was strong : —
"Then why was his reign so brief?" you say —
He reigneth gently who reigneth long.

WHO KNOWS?

THE Lily lifts to mine her nunlike face,
But my wild heart is beating for the Rose:
How can I pause to heed the Lily's grace? —
Shall I repent me by and by? Who knows?

DAY'S MOCKERY.

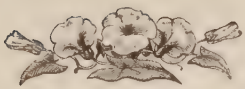
I HEARD Love's voice thrill all the waiting Night,
And I arose and followed where he led:
Then Morning mocked me with revealing light —
The great bright world was empty — Love was dead.

YOU.

I SAW your face, and knew it was the Spring;
Your eyes were bluer than the morning skies,
And when you smiled the birds began to sing,
Waiting no longer for the sun to rise.

I STUDIED LIFE.

I STUDIED Life in Helen's look,
And knew that Life was mine —
Now she is dead I close the book;
Death has no countersign.



THE PRODIGAL.

SAD penitent, beloved of God thou art,
Thy wandering feet He welcomes home at night —
More dear than those who never did depart
Is the returning sinner, to His sight.

Translations.

Turn over a new leaf.

DEKKER.

LONG WEEPING.

(*From the German of Heine.*)

I HAVE in a dream been weeping;
Thou wert in thy grave, I dreamed.
I awoke from that bitter dreaming,
And still the hot tears streamed.

I have in a dream been weeping;
I dreamed thou wert gone from me.
I awoke, and awake kept weeping,
Long time and bitterly.

I have in a dream been weeping;
I dreamed that thou still wert kind.
I awoke, but I weep forever:
My tears have made me blind.

BY MOONLIGHT.

(*From Heine.*)

LIKE dark dreams stand the houses,
Stretched out in lengthened row;
And shrouded close in my mantle
I silently by them go.

The bell of the Cathedral
Chimes midnight from above;
I know, with charms and kisses,
Now waits for me my Love.

The moon is my companion,
Who kindly leadeth me;
At last I reach her dwelling,
And cry out joyfully:

"Old Confidante, I thank thee
That thou hast lit my way!
Shine on, now that I leave thee,
And lend the rest thy ray!

"And should'st thou find a lover,
Who lonely makes his moan,
Give him the same dear comfort
That I, of old, have known."

THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

(*From Heine.*)

WE travelled alone in the darkness,
Posted the whole night through;
On each other's hearts we rested;
We laughed and jested, too.

But with the dawn of the morning,
My Child, how astonished were we;
For between us Love was sitting,
A passenger blind was he.

THE MIRROR.

(*From the Provençal of Théodore Aubanel.*)

OH, long ago she dwelt
In this gay little room —
How shall I find my flower
Here where she used to bloom?
O longing, thirsting eyes,
Pursue the dear surprise:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Work thou some magic spell
And bring her back!

Here, when the morn was bright,
She bathed her lovely face,
Her little hands she bathed,
And clad herself with grace.
Between lips glad with song
Her teeth shone, white and strong:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Work thou some magic spell
To bring her back!

So innocent, so blithe,
Yet starting at a sound,
She let her long hair's veil
Fall her white shoulders round.
Then from her grandsire's book
Her morning prayer she took:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Work thou some magic spell
And bring her back!

Ah, there the book leans now,
Against the sacred palm —
Open, as when she prayed,
Or read some holy psalm!
Surely I hear her feet —
The wind with them is fleet:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Hast thou no magic spell
To bring her back?

At high mass or at fête
How fair she was to see!
And I, who should have prayed, —
O Lord, forgive thou me! —
Watched her, as there she knelt;
For prayer her name I spelt:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Work me some magic spell
And bring her back!

Here leaned she forth to talk;
  Here of her tasks she thought;
For God's love and God's poor
  Such patient stitches wrought;
Her swift hands to and fro
Before thee used to go:
  Mirror, thou know'st her well,
  Yet hast no magic spell
    To bring her back!

Glad days of foolish chat,
  Dear days of love and rhyme,
Season of mirth and dance,
  Love's long-lost, golden time,
Bright hair where sunshine lay
The priest's hands sheared away:
  Mirror, thou know'st her well —
  Hast thou, indeed, no spell
    To bring her back?

But thou dost rule, O God!
  Thy harvest springs from pain;
And fairest blooms are fed
  On tears that fall like rain.
O Gatherer divine,
The sweetest flowers are thine!
  Mirror, thou know'st her well —
  Why hast thou not some spell
    To bring her back?

The day she went away
Her cheeks were bathed in tears;
The long night she had wept
Past joys and future fears;
But when the convent's door
Had closed, she wept no more:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
I seek thy magic spell
To bring her back.

Under the half-dead vine
To this porch I drew nigh:
"This House to Let," I read —
It hurt me like a cry.
No one awaits me here;
But still my heart draws near:
Mirror, thou know'st her well —
Yet thou canst work no spell
To bring her back.

LA VIE.

(*From the French of Montenaeken.*)

AH, brief is Life,
Love's short, sweet way,
With dreamings rife,
And then — Good-day!

And Life is vain —
Hope's vague delight,
Grief's transient pain,
And then — Good-night!

ADDITIONAL POEMS.

TO JULIA WARD HOWE.

On her Eighty-seventh Birthday, May 27, 1907.

YOUTH is thy gift — the youth that baffles Time,
And smiles derisively at vanished years.
Since the long past the present more endears,
And life but ripens in its golden prime,
Who knows to what proud heights thou still may'st climb —
What summoning call thy listening spirit hears —
What triumphs wait, ere conquering death appears —
What magic beauty thou may'st lend to rhyme?

Sovereign of Love and May, we kiss the hand
Such noble work has wrought, and add our bays
To those with which the world has crowned thy brow:
Thy subjects we, in this the happy land,
Thy presence gladdens, and thy gracious ways
Enchant — Queen of the Long-Ago and Now.

WHY?

THE New Year comes with her radiant face,
Clad in white, like a waiting bride —
But she brings no word through the empty space,
No message has reached me since you died.

Was Death Life's ending, or did you go
To a realm so vast, and a task so high,
That you have forgotten this world below,
Where Life is a Dream, and the Dreamers die?

Shall I know, some day, when a cold, still hand
Leads me, in my turn, from this transient sphere,
And guides me on to that Unseen Land,
Why you were taken, and I left here?

ALL IN ONE.

THE pomp of Day and Night —
The sunset and the sun —
Thou, my own Heart's Delight,
Art Day and Night in one.

IF ONCE, JUST ONCE.

WHY do I never see you in my dreams?
The lips are cold that you no longer kiss;
And missing you, the Universe I miss.
The far stars lure me with evasive gleams,
But no new Joy the dead Past's pledge redeems.
Though you have found a larger world than this,
Can you not spare one hour from that wide bliss?
Why do I never see you in my dreams?

One little touch, and I should know you near, —
One whispered word would wake my soul from sleep,
And all I thought was dead, alive would be,
Saved from the blank forgetfulness I fear, —
Immortal then your image I could keep,
If once, just once, you would come back to me.

THE BOLD GHOST.

THE year was young, but the place was old,
And the house had gone to sleep,
And the ghost that came by night was bold,
For the silence was so deep.

Aloud he called to his heart's fair queen,
But she would not unbar the door,
And the window from which she used to lean
Stirred at her touch no more.

In vain through the empty night he cried,
But there came no answering tone;
And then he bethought him that since he died
A hundred years had flown.

But a hundred years should have brought more near
The Love that he loved so well;
And the bold ghost's heart turned cold with fear —
Where was the old-time spell?

Had she forgotten what he held fast? —
They say 't is a woman's way;
Was it only a dream that Love could last,
The dream of an idle day?

From the silent house the bold ghost turned —
  Why dream that a dream is true? —
Ashes were where Love's fire once burned;
  Death's meaning at last he knew.

ONCE MORE.

ONCE more the Morning mocks me with its scorn,
The Sun derides me with its radiant face,
Since you vouchsafe no word from your far place,
And, lacking you, there is no joy of morn.
Did you but speak, my heart would be new-born,
And I — alive again, through that dear grace
Of love, that scoffs at time and conquers space —
Could laugh at those who call my fate forlorn.

Why are you silent? Does your heart forget,
In the proud affluence of joys untold,
Old ways, old words that I remember yet
And treasure, as a miser counts his gold?
Is it that your far ear I cannot reach —
Or am I, earth-enslaved, deaf to Heaven's speech?

ONE DAY.

HOW glad we were of the morn,
When the royal Sun climbed high,
And the winds went wild with glee,
And the birds flew singing by —
Till the swift, bright hours were spent,
And the scornful stars looked down,
For Night is stronger than Day —
And hearts turn cold at its frown.

Ah well, it is so with Life —
We hope, we despair, we die —
We joy in the transient strife —
Then low in the dust we lie —
And over us blossoms creep —
And the moon and the stars look down —
What matter when we are asleep?
We heed neither smile, nor frown.

"BEYOND."

HOW many times has shone the morning sun
On this so lonesome world bereft of thee —
And still I wonder, with each day begun,
Can any sun shine from its sky for me?

Dost thou watch some far dawn, and wish good cheer
To glad new friends who meet thee on thy way,
Or, by the past compelled, dost thou draw near
And whisper old words on this new-born day?

I cannot see thee, for my eyes are blind —
My ears are deaf to unaccustomed speech;
Vainly I grope an outstretched hand to find —
Why didst thou go so far beyond my reach?

FOR EASTER MORN.

HOW gladly dawns the Easter sun!
The wide world thrills with prayer and praise.
Gone by are all Lent's mournful days,
And Hope and Joy seem just begun.

The laughing streams to seaward run —
Wild flowers bedeck the woodland ways,
And homing birds sing merry lays
Of triumph over winter done.

Shall we not joy? We, too, have won,
Through winter's hostile ice-bound days,
To this new dawn that all things praise;
Let us be glad — aye, every one —
When gladly dawns the Easter sun.

LIFE'S SEASONS.

THE seasons come, and the seasons go —
Winter begins them, white with snow;
Then Spring steals on, with her wayward grace,
And the glad world smiles to see her face,
Till Summer, her rival, warms the day,
And the year's proud Queen holds regal sway —
But Autumn follows, and roses die,
And birds fly Southward, and sad winds sigh.

So is our life, with its changeful days —
Shadow and sunlight, and blame and praise —
Its seasons come, and its seasons go —
But God is Our Father — 't is all we know.

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